

BIG GAME HUNTING  
IN CENTRAL AFRICA

W. HUGHES



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IN CENTRAL AFRICA





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A PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR.

# BIG GAME HUNTING IN CENTRAL AFRICA

BY  
W. BUCKLEY

WITH HALF-TONE ILLUSTRATIONS



LONDON  
CECIL PALMER  
49 CHANDOS STREET, COVENT GARDEN, W.C. 2

FIRST  
EDITION  
1930  
COPY-  
RIGHT

Apr. 1, 1932

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY  
MORRISON AND GIBB LTD., LONDON AND EDINBURGH

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# BIG GAME HUNTING IN CENTRAL AFRICA

## CHAPTER I

### AFTER ELEPHANT

IT is popularly supposed that elephants are rapidly becoming extinct, but an experience of mine goes to prove that this is far from being the case; in fact, where there are reasonable game laws and protection from the cruel burnings, etc., practised by the natives, who are also addicted to killing the young ones—these being, of course, so much easier to tackle than the full-grown animal—they will increase to such an extent as to become a nuisance to the shambas, or native villages, in the vicinity, which, in turn, have to be protected against them.

While safaring in company of the late Pete Pearson between Wadelai and Nimule one morning about 10 a.m., we surprised an enormous troop of elephants watering at the Nile, at a spot which is known to this day as Elephant Camp. During the dry season in this part of Africa, the water-holes in the interior dry up, and in consequence the small herds come together, forming one enormous herd; in the rainy season they split up again into herds of two or three

hundred down to small herds of from twenty to thirty, preferring the water-holes to the Nile. On this particular morning they were in tremendous force. I sent back word to Pearson who, being down with fever, was in the rear of the safari, and having to be carried in a *machilla*. However, he came along at once, when we commenced to sort out the big bulls. On our opening fire the elephants in the vicinity stampeded amongst the enormous mass of their fellows in the rear, creating extraordinary confusion and jamming each other in a tight wedge in which they commenced circling round and round, eventually to get rounded up again like a great herd of cattle. Pearson and myself now went amongst them, and by two or three o'clock managed to bag nine, the smallest pair scaling 50 lb. each tusk; the elephants, during all this time, being unable to get away and rounding up again and again. We then made for a small hill, and, this being a savannah country, had an excellent view.

About 4 p.m. the herd seemed to come to an arrangement amongst themselves. They all went off in six battalions like an army on the march, each battalion with its leader; one of the leaders on this occasion happening to be an old cow, and the intervals between the battalions being from 50 to 100 yards, very regularly kept.

We now began to make a count of the herd, our tally being well over two thousand head—a magnificent sight, and the view, as I said, could not have been better. This herd had an itinerary of about 100 miles, when they would arrive back at the place they started from.

Two days later, after dividing the proceeds, Pearson left for the east bank of the Nile to obtain the provisions and ammunition he was expecting at the Post of Koba. We arranged with the Chief, Issa by name, at the next village to transport the porters to the east bank of the Nile, which he promised to do, I arranging to take Pearson and his ivory in my private canoe, which was much larger than the ordinary native variety. The flotilla of three canoes started all right and was soon lost among the papyrus islands, Pearson and myself starting about half an hour later.

We had not gone far when a squall sprang up, and I remarked to Pearson that it was a good job he was in this large canoe instead of being in one of the smaller native craft, as the water was being blown into moderate-size waves, and it is three miles across at this place. After we had got half-way across we met the native canoes coming back, their occupants shouting to us that all the Waganda had been drowned by the capsizing of their canoes in the squall, and as none of them could swim none had got ashore. We now proceeded to search for the porters, and found one only who had caught hold of a floating papyrus island; we dragged him on board, but found no trace of any others. I landed Pearson and, as nothing further could be done, I proceeded to return to the west bank. During the journey across, something struck the bottom of the canoe, which sent it in the air to an angle of 45 degrees, but fortunately we came down plumb flat. I grabbed my rifle and scanned round to see what had done it; then about 100 yards away an old hippo shoved his head and

neck out of the water to see, I imagine, what effect his bump had on the canoe. This being my chance, I got him and he went down, and did not worry us any more. I wondered afterwards if perhaps he had not, in some way, been responsible for the capsizing of Chief Issa's vessels. Hippo on the Nile were accustomed to upset native craft crossing the river with grain. After upsetting a canoe-load of grain they started in to demolish it—the natives, knowing this, make for the shallows when crossing the river, doing a zig-zag course and speeding up when over the deeper channels.

Another day I managed to bowl over a couple of decent bulls in a patch of primeval forest and returned to camp. The next day, as the natives were taking out the tusks and cutting up the meat, a big elephant passed close to where they were busily employed. A native at once ran up to the camp at top speed, arriving breathlessly in front of me, and by means of signs (these natives could speak no language that at that time could be understood by the European Swahili or Nubi, excepting those that had intercourse with Emir Pasha's soldiers, who spoke a smattering of Ki Nubi) conveyed that I should go out and shoot it forthwith. Of course his interest in the matter was solely caused by the hopes of being able to gorge on the meat. We sallied forth, the wild man being in a bath of perspiration caused by excitement and running, and arrived where the natives were having a free fight over the particular tit-bits of fat. However, the wild man signed to come on, and we very soon picked up the spoor.

With the shenzi tracking, we had not travelled



more than a couple of miles through very dense scrub, when the tracking native pointed to something black about 2 yards in front (screened by the dense bush) and bolted together with the gunbearer, both making an awful noise as they went. I gazed in front and saw a black thing pulsating, his stomach, I suppose, and let go both barrels at it and dropped; the animal then coming right over me, fortunately missing stepping on me, his mouth wide open, showing like a red cavern. He did not stop, but went right on at the double. After gathering the shenzi and the gunbearer, I proceeded to follow him, and came up with him standing under a tree in a patch of open country at about 70 yards distance, and offered a shot that would have finished the business, but unfortunately the gunbearer—who had been opening the breech of the rifle, which happened to be a falling block—failed to close the breech, so on pulling the trigger nothing happened. When I discovered the mischief, the elephant was already making off. I put a shot into him whilst he was on the move, but that only had the effect of making him go faster. We followed after him, and found his spoor entered a large patch of high elephant grass (*m'teti*) about 14 feet high and as thick as one's thumb. I then signalled the shenzi to climb a tree on the outskirts of the *m'teti* and see if he could see the animal; whereupon in great excitement he came down almost immediately and dived into the *m'teti*, intimating to me that he had seen him and I should follow him.

Incidentally, at that time I had had no experience of these natives, and naturally I thought he had been

able to see the elephant in a position that would enable me to see him and shoot him. However, I followed as directed, and when we had proceeded about half-way through the patch of grass—it was about 200 yards broad—I discovered there was only one track through it—that taken and made by the elephant—which we followed. All of a sudden there was a roar, and the next thing I knew I was down on my knee and looking at the bottoms of the forefeet of an enormous elephant and simultaneously at his head with a pair of wild, glaring eyes. I let go both barrels of the 500 between the eyes, which stopped him, the recoil of the double 500 knocking me over. I then looked round for my second rifle and found nobody there. I scrambled to my feet and made into the *m'teti*, off the track, loading as I went. As soon as I had loaded I faced about, but everything was absolutely quiet—not a sound.

After a few minutes I blew my whistle, which was a powerful boatswain's, but no answer. I blew it again with the same result. I then sat down and took out my pipe and had a smoke, and blew the whistle again; still no answer. An uncomfortable feeling began to grow upon me that the gunbearer had been caught. About fifteen minutes later, hearing something creeping through the long reeds, I turned my rifle on the direction, and presently the reeds parted, and there was the shenzi with his mouth wide open and a horrible grin on his face. He seemed very pleased to see me alive, as I have no doubt he expected to find a mangled remnant. However, we started the sign language, I asking by means of upturned eyes, etc., if the gunbearer was dead;



otherwise, why had he not come back. Also he was carrying the '400 at the ready. The shenzi laughed and shook his head, and intimated that the gunbearer was quite safe but very far off and too scared to come through the long grass. I sent the fellow back for him, telling him to bring him back by force if necessary ; he left, and afterwards returned with the missing gunbearer, who had taken off his boots and was carrying them in his hand. After this he never put on boots again when going out with me to hunt, and his nerve being also entirely gone, he was of no use afterwards, his fixed idea being to bolt at the least sign of danger. I was, therefore, forced to take from the Safari porters a couple of men to act as gunbearers, and I must say they did quite well ; but in the course of my experience as an elephant hunter, I found that after a man had been properly charged once, the fear of the animal was so great that he was never of much use afterwards.

There was now a distinct heavy blood spoor, and after about three hours, just as the sun was going down, we came up with our quarry again. He made a half-and-half charge, but the lesson had been too much for him, and his stopping half-way in the charge gave me the opportunity to finish him off. He was a big elephant, the tusks scaling 87 and 85 lb.

We were now quite a long way from the camp, and the sun had already gone down ; and between us and the camp were two rivers, the Allah and the Assa, which join on their way to the Nile, and were about two miles wide and infested with crocodiles. The shenzi had now been joined by the son of the chief Agena, who explained that it would be a march

of three hours to reach camp by the way we had come, and asked me if I could swim. I intimated that I could if it was not too far; he said there were only one or two places where one would have to swim, and the rest of the way would merely take us up to the armpits, and the crocs wouldn't know we were coming. As the gunbearer was a coast boy and could swim, I therefore decided to risk the crocodiles, although, being after sundown, that is the time when they are most dangerous. However, we arrived, much to the astonishment of the old Chief, who had never seen a white man put in a day like that. The white people he had seen before had all had to be carried.

On another occasion when after elephants—natives having reported them about two hours' march—a very curious incident happened. I set out, and coming up with them there turned out to be a small herd of between twenty and thirty. I succeeded in locating a large bull, and had the satisfaction of seeing him drop with a single shot in the head, his tusks going over 100 lb. weight each tusk. I then followed the herd, now in full flight, and it should be explained here that they used to go at full lick for about a mile and then pull up to ponder what had really happened; after which they would then push steadily on again. This might happen several times or only once, but always after their usual pull-up, they would go on as before for the best part of a day, when it would be very problematical if one caught them again. I invariably found that the best way was to lose no time, but sprint after them at once; which I have had to do occasionally

for many miles, and I need scarcely add that this is rather trying in the heat of the day when the sun is blazing for all it is worth. One has to be in the pink of condition to carry it through.

On the occasion in question, I had a sprint of a mile or so, then came up with the herd, who were all rounded up. I managed to single out a decent-sized tusker and put a shot close to the ear-hole, at which he dropped. Being now pretty badly blown, as it had been a fast sprint, I cut off his tail, as is the custom amongst elephant hunters—this constitutes a claim should the animal be discovered by another hunter—and climbed on his head, getting a good view of the retreating herd. I pulled out my pipe and enjoyed a smoke. After finishing the smoke—which I should say took about fifteen minutes—I took up the trail again, coming up with them about three hours later and seeing a very big elephant showing his head high above the others that had surrounded him. Taking a shot, I managed to bring him down from the centre of the herd. He was a fairly good tusker at 70 lb., and that being a fairly good day, I retraced my steps back to camp.

Now I must explain that owing to the difficulty of buying sheep for eating purposes—the natives, being naked, had no use for my trade cloth, and in buying food for my porters, took the stuff and put it away for the purpose of trading with the natives on the east bank of the Nile who wore clothes, but they would not part with their live stock for cloth; owing to this difficulty, I say, I made a rule that on killing an elephant they should have the meat, and in exchange they were to present me with a sheep.

This they were delighted to do, and would have given me four or five if I had insisted upon it, but all I required was sufficient fresh meat to carry on with, my gunbearers, being superstitious, having insisted that I ought not to eat the meat, as my luck would turn and I would not have the fortune that was now attending me. That seemed all right, and as they did not touch the meat there was no hardship to me, elephant meat, from a civilized point of view, being a greatly overrated commodity; so everybody was satisfied.

On arriving back at the camp I was met by three different Chiefs, each having in tow a sheep. The matter was soon disposed of: the Chief at whose village I was camping received the largest of the three elephants, which I pointed out to him as being the first; the next Chief was to have the beast I had sat on when having a smoke; and the third Chief the last one shot. The next day, together with some special porters armed with axes, pangas, etc., the Chiefs went off to cut up their prizes. I usually remained in camp and sometimes got a rest. At sundown they all turned up again with four tusks; the Chiefs being satisfied with the exception of one who had been presented with the elephant I had sat on. He, together with my men, explained that when they arrived at the spot they found the animal had gone, and had followed it the whole day without coming up with it. As he put it, the beast could not have been an elephant, but the ghost of one. However, I assured him that it was only the question of keeping after it, when he would eventually find it dead.

I saw this Chief a month or so later, and he declared that he had not found the elephant, so there must have been one walking around minus his tail. I don't like to think what might have happened if the outraged beast had come to whilst I was sitting on his head. Evidently being winded when I fired I was not so steady as usual, and the bullet must have just missed the brain and merely stunned him. A remarkable sequel to this story came some years afterwards in the Mahenge district where I shot an elephant which had had his tail cut off !

## CHAPTER II

### SHOOTING FROM A LADDER

WHILST shooting in a country which was practically all long elephant grass, I found it was practically impossible to see the elephants, and the animals seemed to know that also, as they would let me approach within a few yards without moving off, knowing full well that the hunter was approaching, so something had to be done as they could not see me, nor could I see them. So I forthwith cut down some young saplings and constructed a ladder, which I took with me when after my quarry in the long grass. This ladder was carried by two men, and when we got into the vicinity of the elephants they used to hold it up whilst I mounted to get a view of the position. That done, I would dismount and march on the elephants, and when close enough it was held up again, after which I mounted with the rifle and took my shot.

For this sort of thing, however, it is necessary to have men with good nerves, as more often than not, when they heard the elephants stampeding about, they promptly let go the ladder and bolted, I coming to the ground with a rush, but I invariably got the one I aimed at, as they did not let go till after I fired. Had they stood their ground I would probably have got others.



On another occasion, the late Mr. Cubbitt, who was at that time Provincial Commissioner of Toro, sent me a man who he said was very plucky with elephants. He stood 6 feet 6 inches high, and was certainly very plucky. I used him by climbing on his shoulders and shooting from that position when the elephants had taken cover in the tall elephant grass. This is a practice which has quite a sporting element of danger, as the man whose shoulders one is on can see nothing that is going on and must trust entirely to the hunter, whom he grips tightly by the calves to obviate being knocked over by the recoil. The hunter is, of course, in a similar fix, as he cannot move in the event of a charger.

Situated thus, I nearly had a bad accident in the Semiliki Valley at the foot of Mount Ruenzori. Whilst passing over the Ruenzori escarpment I sighted a solitary bull in the valley in the long elephant grass. I went after him with the tall gunbearer, following him in the long grass, and getting once or twice right on his tail. Seeing him no more than a couple of yards in front, I eventually drove him out of that sea of long grass, whence he made for the open, passing some native huts on his way. There was a large tree in the native compound, and having instructed a native to climb it and see if he could see the animal, he signalled from the top that it was entering another patch of elephant grass. I now followed him in there, and could just see him from one spot, but only the top of his head—not sufficient by a long way to make an effective shot; so now came the opportunity with the tall gunbearer on whose shoulders I mounted, when I got a good view of his

head ; he was only fifteen yards away and facing me. He then put up his trunk preparing to charge ; I raising my double .577 and pulling the trigger. But nothing happened. I broke the gun and the cartridges fell out, upon which I quickly replaced them with fresh ones and fired, but not a second too soon ! He dropped stone dead on his knees and did not even roll over. On examining the cartridges that I had thrown out, I found the hammer had hit the cap, but evidently with not sufficient force to explode it. I lost confidence in that gun, although it had never failed me before or after. The gunbearer had no idea of the danger that he had passed through. If the elephant had succeeded in charging, he would have got us both.



## CHAPTER III

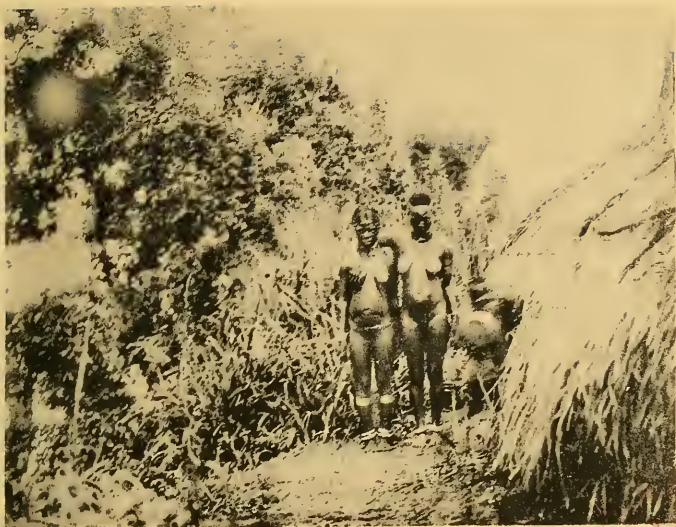
### NATIVE OWNS WILD ELEPHANT

AT the Ruenzori camp, a native came up and said there was a large elephant near his village which was his own personal property. It seemed a peculiar thing to me that anybody could own a wild elephant, and on putting questions to him on the subject I was given to understand that during his father's lifetime, and also all his own known life, this particular elephant had taken its rest under a tree owned by his father. He was now preferring his claim in advance, so that he would be able to appropriate all the meat. He said that he would drive the animal close to my camp so that it would save me the trouble of a long trek to his village and back.

Thinking this an excellent idea, I told him to carry on, although I could not see how he was going to accomplish it, but I found out afterwards that the *modus operandi* was to take advantage of the knowledge that an elephant is very often accompanied by a small bird that flies close past his ear, making a slight whistle, thereby informing him of danger. The animal, hearing this, moves on ; the natives imitating the bird. I have on occasions witnessed the bird giving the alarm, the elephant thereupon pricking up his great ears and moving off. Such, then, was the native's plan, but unfortunately it miscarried. Start-

ing on his job, he gave the elephant the sharp bird-like whistle and it moved on, the native repeatedly changing his position in order to drive the huge beast in the direction in which he wanted it to go ; but unfortunately, in the thick scrub, he lost sight of it. An elephant, it should be added, is, at times, very difficult to see in the thick foliage, as he harmonises so well with his surroundings, and what may be called protective colouring. The native, therefore, whistled in order that when the animal moved he would be able to see where he was, but luck was against him, and I also think that Jumbo had become suspicious, for as it happened, being not more than three or four paces from him and hearing the whistle, he also saw the man and promptly caught hold of him and swung him twenty yards into a tree. The latest reports are that the man is not yet dead, but I did not see him again.

A couple of days afterwards a woman was killed while out looking for elephants. I was passing a village on my return to camp, and, hearing a considerable wailing, inquired what it was about. I was told it was in consequence of the woman who had been killed that day in the manner stated.



LIEP



AGE  
SUS  
NEW

(Upper) NATIVE WOMEN ON THE OUBANGHI RIVER.

(Lower) REMOVING ELEPHANT'S TUSKS WEIGHING  
OVER 100 lbs. EACH.



## CHAPTER IV

### PACE OF AN ELEPHANT

AT the same camp an elephant gave me considerable trouble; I put no less than nineteen shots into him and brought him down again and again, but he always managed to struggle to his feet, and the bush was so thick that one could not see more than a few yards ahead, in consequence of which I could never get a clear shot. He eventually got into a large herd of cows, who closed round him, and running short of ammunition I had to abandon the chase for that day.

The next day, however, I went after him and came on where he had repeatedly lain down, and while following him we saw by the spoor that he had been joined by another bull and they were travelling slowly together. We were now close behind them, and I have no doubt that they knew it.

I now sighted one elephant and looked round for the other, but nowhere could he be seen, so I advanced on the solitary animal and put a broadside shot near the ear-hole. He did not go down, but went at full speed down an incline (he was on a small hill), and at three hundred yards farther he cannoned a tree with his head. The tree, which was a fair-sized one and about 9 inches in diameter, went down as if it was a skittle. He then picked himself up and fell dead.

I have never before seen an elephant go at such a pace, and it was my opinion at the time that a race-horse for that distance could not have caught him up. On examining him, I found he was not the animal I had put all those shots in the day before, but the bull that had accompanied the wounded one. The other elephant had got such a start that we were not able to come up with him ; he was found dead by the natives the following day.



## CHAPTER V

### A NARROW ESCAPE

A NARROW shave. Whilst camped at the village of M'Boga, about fifteen miles inland from the Nile, some natives came in with the news that there was a big elephant about one hour's journey away carrying enormous tusks very much longer than my tent—my tent being a nine by twelve. This certainly was, by their account, some elephant, so without wasting time I, together with the natives, went after it, and after about one and a half hours came on its spoor. By the size of its footprints it was a big animal, but the natives were very nervous and, instead of taking me to the place where they had seen him, were wandering in different directions, trying to catch a sight of him without going too near.

This was distinctly annoying, and as I explained to them the elephant was bound, before long, to get the wind of one or the other of the scattered natives and would clear off and we should never see him. So I prevailed on them to keep close to me and we would move up wind after the beast till we sighted him, but they were so jumpy that it affected my gun-bearers as well.

The natives who had been tracking now dropped behind, and I on my mule took the lead and, as it was getting late, went at a good pace through the bush

until, after a while, I caught a glimpse of my quarry crossing a swamp. I wanted a man to give me a lead through the swamp, as it is very treacherous for the small hoofs of a mule and one is likely to get bogged, but it was "no go"; nobody would give a lead, so I chanced it, and fortunately came through all right. The elephant was now on the go and making good time, having got our wind, and I suppose knew that we were hunting him, and as the sun was getting lower I was making the best pace when, all at once, I caught sight of the animal about three yards ahead through the long grass in which we were travelling. He then swerved to the right, I immediately dismounting and seizing my gun from the gunbearer to follow cautiously on the spoor, but he only went another hundred and fifty yards and then stopped in a depression of the ground and waited for me; evidently being fed up with being chased.

On my approaching, he watched me intently whilst I manœuvred for an opening to get in a fatal shot, and as I moved round to get the brain shot by the ear, he also moved round and was always facing me, and being, too, as I said, in a depression was, therefore, at the wrong angle to get the frontal brain shot.

I could see that he had no intention of letting me get a broadside of him, and also that he was becoming seriously annoyed, and would at any moment charge, so I whispered to my gunbearer, Simba, that I was going to put in a frontal shot with both barrels to turn the beast, when he was immediately to hand me my second gun, upon which, no doubt, a vital spot



would be exposed and I would then be able to get him.

He now raised his trunk to charge, whereupon I let him have both barrels between the eyes, turning him as I expected. I then held out my hand for my second gun, as arranged with Simba, but was informed that he had already fired the same time as I had. I was very annoyed, but could not wait to argue about it then, as the elephant was off at full speed, so I loaded again, mounted the mule, and gave chase, the gunbearer and the Syce bringing up the rear. I came up with him as he was going down a slope at a trot, when, discovering that he was being followed and I close behind him, he stopped and turned round and faced me. I at once dismounted and prepared for him, when he raised his trunk preparatory to charging. I gave him, as before, both barrels between the eyes, upon which, with a roar, he charged, and I turned for my second gun, but the gunbearer had done precisely the same as he had done in the first instance—let go when I did.

I was now with an unloaded gun and an elephant charging at the gallop; the only thing to do being my usual movement when charged, *i.e.* dash off at right angles, but what was my consternation to discover that he also had changed his course and was now close behind me. Running for all I was worth and being very fit I was making good time and altered my course to the direction being taken by my mule, which, by this time, had been abandoned by the Syce and was making very good running on his own account. I had caught up within a couple of yards of the mule when, simultaneously, the

elephant caught us up, the mule lashing out his hind legs while I dived with all my force into a small bush in the long grass on my left, where I remained motionless.

The elephant, instead of keeping on and following the retreating natives, jammed his forefeet in the ground about seven paces in front of the bush where I was lying; returning then and beginning to feel for me with his trunk, the trunk being now right over me projecting about three or four feet, and the blood was pouring from his head. I was fascinated watching his enormous feet and wondering if he would make that one step forward which would have trodden on me. I felt that the least movement of the grass would have disclosed my presence, but probably the blood pouring from his head upset his sense of smell. He now slowly went back to where he had pulled up when I had dived in the grass, and stood there for a minute or two, wondering, I presume, what had become of me; then he went slowly off to the right.

You can imagine my relief! Before you could say "knife" I had two cartridges in the gun, cautiously raised myself up, and made for a tree about twenty yards away and sat down. I then discovered that my hands and arms were badly cut about as a result of the force with which I had thrown myself in the bush.

Eventually the Syce and gunbearer turned up, the mule—used to this sort of thing—being found not far away quietly waiting in an open place for some one to catch him. I must describe this mule, as he was an exceptionally peculiar animal. In the

first place, he was marked like a draught board ; and secondly, he had passed a vote of " no confidence " in black people and used to play a most terrifying trick on them. On occasions he would notice a native standing still in an open place, and without further warning would rush at him with his mouth open ; the native, catching sight of him, would flee for his life, upon which the mule would chase him, making a grab at his shirt or other garment. Then, like a flash, he would swing round and let out at the fleeing native with his hind feet. At Masindi Station, there being no stabling accommodation and the sun being hot, he turned the Indian storekeeper out of his shop and took up his position inside. A big crowd collected outside the shop, and every now and again he would charge out at them and disperse them, and then return quietly to the shop and doze in the doorway. I had to go myself and take him away. By just beckoning to him, he would follow me like a lamb. Even the Syce who used to groom and feed him could do nothing with him, and would on occasions be savaged by him. I had the greatest difficulty in keeping a Syce, as after a few days of Pinto's playful ways he would desert.

This mule in an ordinary way had not much pace, but once when an elephant chased us he gave me a surprise in the way he could leg it. He also, if one was approaching too close to an unseen elephant, would give a slight sniff to show his disapproval of such tactics, which would, at the same time, put me on the alert.

Resuming my story, the Syce and gunbearer had now turned up, and after we had finished arguing

why Simba had fired off my second gun, and therefore left me with an empty gun at the mercy of the elephant, we started off again after the old ruffian, the natives, by the way, having now all cleared off home, having had enough of it, and on passing other villages spread the report that I had been killed; which news travelled very quickly and reached the Belgian Post at Wadelai, who sent out an Askari for confirmation, when I was very pleased to inform him that it was unfounded.

We caught up with the elephant, again going very slowly, and, on his winding us, he made a half-hearted attempt to charge, but I emptied the contents of both rifles into him, Simba not letting me down this time. The tusks proved to be exceptionally large, and weighed respectively 145 lb. and 137 lb., those being the largest I have shot, although I have shot many that scaled over the 100 lb. mark, including one that dragged on the ground and made a trail like a bicycle wheel.

In conclusion, harking back to the nervousness of the natives who accompanied me on this particular hunt, the reason turned out to be that the elephant had already caught and killed two natives who were endeavouring to drive him out of their maize fields.

## CHAPTER VI

### ANOTHER CLOSE SHAVE

**A**BOUT midday, elephants having been reported—when natives are hunting for you it is generally in the heat of the day when one has to go after them, as it is then that the animals stop owing to the heat and are under the shade of the large trees—and everything being ready, we went at once after them, and after about a couple of hours' march came on two bulls, but could not get in a shot. I therefore followed them up and managed to put in three awkward shots into one of them, but owing to one of the guns refusing to eject, I lost the opportunity of bringing him down ; so I went after him for quite a long distance, after which he began to travel in a peculiar **S** manner, denoting that he wants to stop, but fears that he is being followed, so makes these twistings with the object of getting the wind in any direction that the enemy may come.

From my perch on the mule I managed to catch sight of him as he was doubling back, and from his wicked look he seemed to be getting ready to charge ; he was now about fifty or sixty yards away. I slipped off the mule, and on reaching the ground I could not see him at all owing to the long grass, so I told a man to climb a large tree at the rear and see if he could locate him. In the meantime, a foolish



porter had advanced ahead and mounted a tiny sapling about the thickness of a man's wrist, and on looking in his direction I saw that he was beckoning to me; so naturally I thought he could see the animal, which, in fact, he had. I therefore handed my rifle to the gunbearer and pulled myself up, which allowed me to just see over the grass, but I had no sooner caught sight of the animal—which was not more than twenty yards away—when he charged right up to the little tree where we were clinging like apples—I could have touched him with my hand.

I had grasped the porter tight so that he should not make the slightest movement, and the elephant could not discern us from the foliage; so without moving I called to the gunbearer, who was holding my gun about eight yards away, to fire at the animal, threatening him with all sorts of dire consequences if he failed to do so. He let drive with both barrels, hitting the beast in the stomach, which shifted him at the gallop; and from my view, looking over the grass, I could see the porters and followers dropping down, some pulling the grass over them so that the elephant could not see them—the natives say that if a man lies flat on the ground an elephant will not see him as long as he does not move—and while I was still perched up the tree he wheeled round again and stood facing my little tree at not more than fifty yards, frankly puzzled. I told the gunbearer to stand fast, as he would probably return—it had all happened so quickly that I had not had time to get down from my perch—but the porter and myself were very thankful that he did not, and after gazing at the tree for a little while longer, he slowly moved off. He was

quite a small tusker but a big elephant. All the men had had a severe fright, and showed me where they had hurt themselves in their endeavours to hide under the grass. The case was met with an issue of Americani (unbleached calico). The elephant was found dead next day.

## CHAPTER VII

### SURROUNDED BY ELEPHANTS

STRIKING camp, I proceeded in a northerly direction, and on route encountered two white rhinoceroses on the left of the track, at the same time hearing elephants. It is a curious fact that when elephants enter the country where there are rhinos, the latter remain with the elephants until they pass the frontier of their country—each male rhino has a portion of country that no other male rhino may enter without fighting and vanquishing the occupier—when the rhinos do not proceed farther, and the elephants are taken in hand by another troop of rhinos, the former lot returning to their own domain. The rhinos, when accompanying the elephants, seem to scout for them, as they are always the first to give the alarm.

I followed the elephants, which were in a great herd; in fact, the same herd that I had met when accompanied by the late Pete Pearson. It had by this time completed its usual itinerary and had arrived back in the district where Pearson and myself had encountered the beasts about a month before. They were in a thick growth of saplings about fourteen feet high, which quite screened them, and one only knew they were there by the swaying of the thin trees as they passed with an occasional glimpse of a



dark mass. After I had followed them for about an hour I came to an open space in the bush, and then perceived that I was absolutely surrounded by them.

The extent of the clearing was about twenty acres, and the elephants were feeding on the young trees surrounding it. I made for the centre of this open plain where, as luck had it, there were a few bushes and two or three small trees. On reaching there I saw that it was a place used by lions, so large was the number of antelope bones lying around, some of quite a recent date—a day or so before.

I now saw that I was in a pretty tight corner, as the elephants were becoming increasingly suspicious and would, every now and again, stop eating and come to the edge of the clearing with their trunks up like periscopes. Knowing there was something there, but unable to make up their minds what it was, they were certainly confused, and as I conjectured, being quite surrounded, the wind also carried the scent of the elephants on the other side. In the meantime, I had taken the sticks from my porters and lashed them on to the few trees, making a rest for my rifles, as I expected to be in for a hot time shortly, but this job had not taken me long before about fifty elephants, headed by a giant, head and shoulders above the rest, advanced through the clearing on my position. I watched them come on, which they seemed to do with a purpose, as some of them would throw up their trunks to see if the scent was right, allowing them to approach within fifty yards and then opened fire, keeping a fusillade as

fast as I could fire my rifles, till I could see nothing for the dust—although it had rained the night before.

The elephants from behind stampeded towards their oncoming fellows, but were trying to avoid the clump of bush that I was in. They passed within a couple of yards each side of me, those closest to the bush putting all their weight against others jamming them from the outside. In a few seconds it was all over, and when the dust cleared away, there was nothing to be seen of the enormous herd with the exception of the wounded giant who was standing at the far end of the clearing with two cows supporting him. I now went after him and succeeded in getting within thirty yards, but could not see him distinctly on account of the foliage, although able to see that he was badly wounded and trembling. I took a shot at him, but the vital spot was covered by a cow elephant, and on my firing he dropped, and the cow nearest to me left the wounded bull and chased me. She kept me busy dodging amongst the trees, and whilst chasing me never took her eyes off me, but, as opportunity occurred, I took snapshots at her, although she never swerved from her determination to have me. At last, however, she exposed her head for a vital shot, when I dropped her dead.

I now went to look for the big bull, but he had gone. Under cover of the demonstration made by the cow I had shot, the other cow had got him away. I followed the blood spoor until it was no longer visible, and as the herd had split up in three different lots and gone in three different directions, and owing

to the enormous number of elephants, they had cut up the ground, making it impossible to follow any individual spoor. We had to abandon the chase, and I never found the big bull I had wounded, but I have no doubt that the natives did.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE CLOSEST

WHILST hunting in the Manyema country of the Belgian Congo I had an adventure with an elephant which might very easily have been my last. In the first place, perhaps I had better explain that the Manyema country is a tract of vast swamps and slow-running rivers, and the elephants inhabiting that country have habits that I have seen nowhere else. For instance, after raiding a village for food, about daylight they make for the swamps and lie completely immersed, with perhaps only an ear or even the tip of an ear showing above the water during the whole day, practically becoming more or less amphibious ; this being done to protect themselves from hunters, and it is certainly very effective, because there is no way of reaching them except through the water. I have tried to do this, but have found, after going a very short distance into the swamps, that one was out of one's depth, and as a raft or canoe—if there were such a thing—would be of no use, the swamps being covered with long tangle-foot grass making it impossible to propel the craft through the mass of undergrowth, which has also the most horrible and poisonous nettles that I have ever come across. There are ordinary swamps as well, but they are not the kind that elephants take



LIBRARY



LIBRARY

(Upper) A NATIVE WOMAN POUNDING CORN INTO FLOUR WITH A WOODEN PESTLE AND MORTAR (OUBANGHI RIVER).

(Lower) THE AUTHOR'S MULES AND GUN BEARERS.





refuge in when they know they will be hunted, as they are perfectly aware that they are doing wrong when they raid a shamba, and take the necessary precautions.

At a village where I was camped, the natives, very early in the morning, reported that an elephant had been raiding their shamba and would I go after it. I agreed to do so, and accordingly set forth and took up the spoor from the shamba; we followed the spoor for about a mile to where it entered a swamp, when we then followed it in the water by means of the discoloration made by the elephant as he went through it. We had now been travelling for about two hours, the water averaging in depth about the waistline, sometimes a little deeper and sometimes a little shallower, when the man who was tracking made a bolt past me. I, thinking he had seen the elephant, throwing my gun up and peering ahead, expecting myself to spot the beast. His action was explained by a native saying, *Angalia bwana*—"look out, sir," and pointing in the water, where I saw a huge black snake chasing the tracker, who presently climbed one of the trees that were growing in the water. We then lost sight of the snake, but every one had stampeded from the reptile and messed up the dirty water which was our guide for following the elephant, so we had to give him up.

I told my tracker to get out of the swamp, which he tried to do, but it was another hour before we succeeded in getting on dry land, having been wading for over three hours. On reaching dry land it was not long before we picked up the spoor of another elephant and began tracking him. After about an



hour, coming on one of those rare open glades where the sun can pierce through, the foliage not being so dense, through this bit of glade I saw an elephant feeding on a young sapling, but one step would bring him into view and two steps make him invisible again in the jungle.

I quickly made up my mind (he was about sixty yards away), and sprinted so as to be up with him when he made his next step, but unfortunately he never made that next step, so I sprinted to about three yards from him and still could see only about three feet of his tusks as they protruded out of the jungle broadside on. The elephant, being in the act of feeding, had his trunk up, and there it remained in a state of arrested animation.

Quickness being essential, I fired through the foliage at where I took his head to be, trying, if possible, to get the brain shot, which got him in the head all right, and he retreated with a loud honk and smashing of trees. I then took up his spoor, the tracker leading, and after about an hour's tracking we heard him and found where he had been standing for some time. He now retreated into some very thick jungle stuff, which one had to push one's way through, and which closed up again behind when one had passed. Approaching cautiously, I presently heard him stamping his feet, evidently very excited. I then stopped and listened, and, everything being quiet again, advanced farther, when, all of a sudden, there was a roar and he came at full tilt down his own track and the track we were following. I sprang to one side (I at that time leading, the gunbearer behind me and the tracker farther in the rear), and the gun-

bearer did so also, but instead of remaining alongside me, he went for all he was worth. The tracker—out of sight of me in the rear—evidently did not jump, for the elephant knocked him down.

I took a quick shot at the infuriated animal's shoulder, when he turned from the tracker and was on me like a terrier on a rat. I am very quick at reloading, but I had only time to jam the bolt home when it was knocked out of my hand and thrown a distance, as we afterwards found, of about twenty yards. His left tusk grazed my forehead, the rifle (it was a .375 Holland and Hallend Magazine take down) was hit where the barrel and the stock are screwed together, splitting his tusk at the point and embedding a small piece of ivory in the rifle which is still there.

When he charged he went down practically on his knees to be able to get the rifle, and he now collared me with his trunk by my hunting shirt and threw me about in the air, I hanging on to him for all I was worth. I afterwards came down with a crash, and he stepped on my left side, also on my right ankle; then he seemed glad to get rid of me. He next collared my topee and went off with it, running about twenty yards, when he fell down, got up again, and then fell down dead.

A shout came from the bush: *Bwana, wewe ugwu sana*—"Master, you are very strong": and I saw the tracker—the gunbearer had not yet shown up. I was very annoyed, having had a proper good hiding, my face being covered with blood, which I washed at a small swamp close by. On examining myself I found a great red mark on my left side, also

my ankle had begun to swell. All the cartridges had been thrown out of my shirt pocket, where they were kept on the left-hand side, and on looking for them I found them, but several of them were bent. I now made my way to a mission station which happened to be about three hours away, and on arriving there the people kindly gave me a bath and dressed my wounds, etc. The next day, with very little difficulty, I reached my camp about four hours away, but was unable to move for over a fortnight afterwards. I had to leave that district, as it so put the wind up the natives that they would have nothing to do with elephants. On questioning the gunbearer as to why he bolted—he was a Congo-man—he said he thought it was the proper thing to do, and anyway I could not expect him to have the same *nguvu*—strength—as I had.

## CHAPTER IX

### LOST IN THE BUSH

ON one occasion, leaving the banks of the Nile, I made my way into the interior, following the numerous elephant tracks for the purpose. After about three hours' travelling I came on a fairly large pool where an elephant had been drinking just before my arrival, and the place being very much cut up by tracks, I decided to pitch my camp on a small hill about a half-mile away, so as not to disturb the game when they came down to drink.

In the afternoon, the camp having been made, I thought I would take a stroll in the vicinity and try with my '22 miniature rifle to get one of the numerous oribi that I had seen on the march. So taking my men with me I started round the camp, and had just shot a guinea-fowl with the '22, which practically makes no noise and, being not distinguishable by the game as a rifle, they take no notice of the slight report.

All of a sudden I saw, coming towards me, a troop of elephants about twenty in number. Seizing my elephant rifle, I prepared for them, and having singled out a bull I let drive and dropped him, whereupon a cow charged straight for us, but, on coming within twenty yards, turned and rejoined the herd now in full flight. Giving chase, after a couple of miles'

sprint I caught up with them, but on the way my progress was constantly impeded by rhino and buffalo, which were mixed up with the herd and would remain behind and bar our passage. On coming close, the buffalo would give way, but not so the rhino, which allowed me to approach within fifteen yards, and although I did not want to shoot them, as the noise of the rifle would cause the elephants to stampede again, I was forced to shoot two showing unmistakable signs that they were going to charge.

Not stopping to examine them, I resumed my chase of the retreating elephants, which were ambling along at a good pace. I eventually caught them up and succeeded in getting two more bulls.

The gunbearers and myself were now completely exhausted, and I, being drenched with perspiration, finished my water-bottle. It was getting dusk, so I started to return to camp, when the gunbearers and the porters informed me that the camp was in quite a different direction from the one that I was taking. I could not believe it, as I have a very sound sense of direction, but not wanting to be pig-headed I asked them, each in turn, their idea of the camp's whereabouts. They all backed up the gunbearer who had first informed me that I was going wrong, so I gave in and told the man in question to lead the way, he having affirmed that he was absolutely certain that he knew where to go.

The camp, as a matter of fact, was not more than half an hour distant, but we travelled for two hours without coming on any signs of the fires which would have been stoked and kept at a big flare, as was the custom when I failed to return at sundown.



It was now between eight and nine o'clock, and the moon being up we could see fairly well to walk, but I had constantly to send men up trees to see if they could see any signs of the camp. We had all become exceedingly thirsty, following the chase, and the gunbearer, knowing he was lost as well as losing all of us, became sulky and impudent and said we ought all to walk to the Nile to get water. I informed him that the Nile was at least twenty miles away; but he persisted, and, disobeying my orders to the contrary, eventually made a bolt for it with my double-barrelled '450, whereupon I fired a shot over his head, which had the effect of making him drop the gun.

The gun I recovered, but I never saw the man again, nor did he return to Uganda, so I presume that he was either killed by the natives or perished miserably of thirst.

The porters were now very restless and some of them wanted to follow the gunbearer, they still thinking he must know the road. However, I told them that the next man disobeying an order would be dealt with in a summary manner, and our thirst by this time having become intense, I gave up all idea of finding the camp that night. We therefore made our way into the ravines and hollows where we could hear the frogs croaking, in the hopes of finding a puddle of water, if ever so small; but our hopes were not realized, and we were forced to give it up. I then decided to walk in a certain direction, ordering branches of bush and trees to be thrown down as we went along in case we had to retrace our steps, and sent a man behind to see that this was done.

We had marched this way for a couple of hours

when the moon went down, and I decided to rest till daylight; so coming on a large ant-hill we lay against it, but sleep was out of the question for any of us, our thirst being so acute. Practically the only word spoken, in fact, was *maji*—water—which was repeated at intervals during the night; and one man informed me that if it should be his luck to strike water again he was sure he could not leave it. I encouraged them by saying that as I knew the bush thoroughly, when it became daylight we would retrace our footsteps by means of the thrown branches, and from where they ended I would take them straight to camp.

Incidentally, a rhino came within a few yards of us during the night and, in spite of our shooin him, would not go away, so I was forced to let drive with my heavy gun in his direction, which had the required effect, as we heard him lumbering off.

On the first approach of daylight we were up and commenced to follow the trail of the broken branches, but after an hour or more they suddenly gave out, and all our attempts to pick up the broken thread failed. The men deputed for the duty had evidently fallen into a doze and ceased throwing down the branches until probably my shouting from in front awakened them to go on with it again, but consequently leaving gaps.

It was now getting on for eight o'clock, and the sun at this season of the year in the Nile Valley—dry season—begins to get very hot. Our thirst, moreover, was worse than ever, and the men were starting to scatter with the intention of making a bolt, being all under the impression that they could individually



find water if they looked for it. I was practically certain that no other water existed, with the exception of the pool that we were camped on, which turned out to be so, otherwise the elephants would not have come down to the Nile to drink, a walk of twenty miles to water being nothing for an elephant. I therefore ordered the men to come back to me ; on their hesitating to do which I put up the rifle and shouted to them that if any man disobeyed I would shoot him. They then returned, when I explained the situation, adding that if they followed me and walked hard I could take them to a pool of water by midday.

So off we started, and as my tongue was now getting too big for my mouth, I put a small stone there to produce saliva, the men doing likewise. Taking the lead, I went at a good round pace, relying on my instinct of direction, and after about four or five hours' marching in an agony of thirst, and expecting that at any moment the men would give up, of all the most fortunate and blessed things that could happen, I came right on the exact spot where there was an oasis of green grass. Still, I was not sure that there was water, but the presence of a Kobus Kob, a species of waterbuck, on the green patch, strengthened the idea that water was near by.

Putting up my rifle, I took steady aim at the waterbuck, which dropped dead to the shot, the men rushing up to it and drinking its blood and the water in its paunch. I, in the meantime going farther across the green oasis searching for water, as good fortune had it, came on a small puddle not three feet in diameter ; upon which I shouted to the men, and,

dropping the buck, they came rushing up and were presently gorging themselves to such an extent that I had to pull them off, as I was afraid that they would burst.

We remained there for about an hour, the men going repeatedly backwards and forwards for just another drink. I then told them that about two hours farther there was a fine river that ran into the Nile and that I would take them to it ; whereupon they then cut up the buck in pieces, put it on their heads, and we took the trail once more. They now had the greatest confidence in my sense of direction, and said amongst themselves that I was able to walk through the bush as if on a road that I could see and they could not. We reached the river in due course, much to their satisfaction ; I, myself, taking off my coat and lying in the beautiful cool river up to my neck.

About four o'clock, after filling my water-bottle, which was the only one we had amongst us—the only reason it happened to be with us was that it was always handed to the gunbearer at the same time as the guns he was going to carry ; otherwise, as it had been my intention merely to stroll round about the camp, the bottle would, in the ordinary course of things, have been left behind ; after this precaution, we started off again, and about sundown we fetched up at the village of the Chief Anika, whose people get their water from the Nile, and this being the place where we had left the big water on our trek into the interior where our safari was now camped. Anika was very pleased to see me, and, much concerned by the sufferings we had gone through, immediately

sent his people for fowls, eggs, etc., and flour for the men. (I might mention that an elephant-hunter is assured of every welcome from the natives, being the provider of unlimited meat.) I then asked Anika to find a couple of his men who could track my safari through the bush, which he did, and on these men arriving the next morning, I sent them off to the camp for food, intending to start for camp on their return.

They did not come back till late in the afternoon, saying they had great difficulty in following the spoor of our safari; though I rather think that they were intrigued by the elephant meat they had found, and found difficult to leave. However, arrive they did with some of my porters, who had brought blankets and food to cook, sending me enough for three or four people. So sleeping again that night at Anika's, we left the following morning with a native of the Lugwara tribe who was out hunting. These natives, by the way, go stark naked and are very fierce, the surrounding natives being in fear of them, and this man was quite alone, armed only with a spear and bow and arrows.

On questioning our guide, he said he had not the least doubt that he could find my camp, whereupon we started forth, the Lugwara taking the lead and from time to time casting his eyes skyward. After a couple of hours we saw large flocks of vultures circling overhead; the guide then remarking that there was our game and made for it. On arriving at the dead elephants, we found some hundreds of natives still cutting up the carcasses; they had formed a camp and were smoke-drying the meat. This was

too much for our guide, who left us and made for the nearest animal, and proceeded to cut off chunks of raw meat with his spear and stuff them in his mouth. I noticed that he particularly favoured the fat pieces, and as I could not prevail on him to leave the feast, another native who, I presume, had eaten his fill, guided us to the camp, which was not two miles distant.

On arriving, I found that all the tusks and rhino horns had been brought in and stacked. The natives, being very far-seeing, would not attempt to steal the tusks, realizing that they were getting the meat free, and should a tusk be stolen the reign of the free meat would come to an end. The porters were continually getting lost at this camp while going out for wood to keep the fires burning at night. They were brought back by the Lugwara, who were about twenty miles to the west. I had to insist on their cutting branches of trees and throwing them down, the better to ensure their safe return.

## CHAPTER X

### COW ELEPHANTS

IN a preceding chapter I mentioned the case of a cow taking the bull off when it had been wounded ; a form of rescue which has happened many times during my experience, but only once in the case of a bull thus assisting a cow. As a further instance of the devotion of the cow, I recall that I had singled a bull from the herd and given him the shoulder shot, which had the effect of crumpling him up. As he subsided, three cows ran to his assistance, and two of them, one getting each side of him, with the aid of their tusks levered him up ; the other making a demonstration at me and trumpeting like fury, which, of course, had the effect of making me get out of her way. In the meantime, the others had picked up the male and, one on each side of him, were hauling him off as fast as possible. After the cow had made her demonstration she ran after the others, I following on their tracks. We had not proceeded for more than a mile when I saw the bull drop again, upon which the cows started trumpeting and dashed off. On going up to the bull I found he was quite dead.

I again encountered elephants when trekking to the West through a very beautiful country, where the valleys and ravines were primeval tropical forest, and



where, running through practically every ravine, was a beautiful stream of fresh water; outside of these streams the country being entirely different, consisting of rolling prairies with an absence of bush. Incidentally, a peculiarity of the natives inhabiting this part of the country was that they did not, for some superstitious reason or other, eat the elephant meat. Therefore there was to me the extraordinary sight of the whole carcass of an elephant left to be devoured by hyenas, the natives only taking from the dead elephant the sinews from the neck for the manufacture of bow-strings.

The natives assured me there were plenty of elephants quite close and that they would show me them the next day. On the following morning, therefore, I was at the tent awaiting the arrival of natives with their report as to the whereabouts of the game, when what was my surprise to see twelve elephants coming across a shamba at one hundred and fifty yards from the tent, where a crowd of native women were engaged in hoeing their lands and creating quite a din with their incessant jabbering. I called the attention of my gunbearers, and told them to tell the shamba natives to keep quiet, but one of the natives standing by informed me that the elephants would not take any notice of the noise, as they were accustomed to it, which was borne out as the herd marched straight across the shamba, passing within a few yards of the hoeing natives without taking the slightest notice.

Leaving the tent, I made after the elephants, to discover that they were all females, and followed them for curiosity's sake to see what they would do.

After they had passed through the shamba they entered a ravine a couple of hundred yards away and proceeded to enjoy a comfortable doze. An old cow evidently had been told off to mount guard, as on my approaching them she made every sign of annoyance. The others continued to doze and took no notice of us whatever, but the old cow would make feints as if she intended to charge in her endeavour to chase us away, and finding that it took no effect, she gave it up and paid no further heed to us, settling herself to doze with the others.

I then left them, coming to the conclusion that these particular elephants had never been hunted, although I found ample evidence that the natives trapped them by means of great pits with hardened wood stakes at the bottom, so that an elephant having the bad luck to fall down one of the pits would be impaled on the stakes.

On getting back to the tent I found the natives had arrived—the native in his natural state is a good sleeper—with the news that they could show me the whereabouts of a herd of elephants, so I set out, the natives leading the way. After marching for a couple of hours we mounted a commanding hill, from which I had a view of about one hundred elephants trekking across an open plain. They were evidently making for a ravine—it being about midday—to take their usual siesta. I followed them, arriving at the ravine after they had all entered, and took up a position from where I was able to see them as they passed in the ravine below. The gunbearers and myself were crouching down, peering intently through the thick foliage on the look out for a big bull, when



what should appear, quite silently from the dense foliage, but an enormous cow elephant just about one yard in front of me. I immediately threw up my rifle and covered her whilst the gunbearers and the natives made strategic movements to the rear; but evidently there was no malice in her, as, instead of attempting to flatten me out, she retired bowing her head and backing herself into the dense foliage. She appeared to me to be saying, "I beg your pardon; I was not aware that you were here." I thought naturally that she would give the alarm to the herd farther down in the ravine, but nothing of the sort happened, and the elephants kept slowly on their way up the ravine, quite oblivious of our presence.

Shortly after, a fine bull emerged. I fired and dropped him, whereupon there was a great stampede, with a loud noise of falling and smashing timber, and about a mile farther on the elephants emerged from the ravine into the open and stood there. I examined them and found they were all cows and young bulls. They waited not more than a couple of hundred yards in the open, remained in the sun for about half an hour, and then, coming to the conclusion that everything was now quiet again, returned to the shade of the ravine.

Another peculiar incident happened whilst in this part of the country. I had been following a herd of elephants across the plains, and they were about a mile ahead when, to my astonishment, an elephant came trotting silently behind us—they can, in spite of their enormous weight, move without making a sound—and passed at only a few yards' distance between the



(Upper) A NATIVE CHIEF AND SPEARMEN KILLING A LIONESS.

(Lower) 105 TUSKS WEIGHING 5,300 lbs. VALUE £4,000.



gunbearer and myself without appearing to have seen us.

Looking back on these incidents in after-years, I have an uncomfortable feeling in my mind that if elephants had not been so ruthlessly and persistently hunted, cruelly trapped in many ways, as well as being burned alive, those with a race other than the Africans would have been turned into useful domestic animals. In the same connection, I once saw in this country a herd of twenty cow-elephants taking their siesta between two villages which were not more than one hundred yards apart !

## CHAPTER XI

### ELEPHANT FOOD

IN the country of which I am writing there are a large amount of tamarind, wild plums, and other wild fruits which ripen at different seasons of the year, and the elephants are to be found when the fruit is ripe. The elephant rarely chooses grass, but may be occasionally seen eating small quantities when it is green and succulent. They are fond of roots, and will knock down quite large trees, the big bulls using their tusks as a lever, and putting their weight into it to get at a favourite root that they want; the trees that they uproot being of the kind that one would climb to be safe from an attacking elephant. They also have a knowledge of trees with medicinal properties, and the natives make use of the animals' knowledge to collect the bark of such trees. I have tasted some of these elephant medicines collected by the natives who have accompanied me in my hunting excursions. In the big tropical forest there is no proper food for the elephant, the lianes not forming any part of their food, although they may be seen occasionally eating the leaves of a tall reed grass which grows very densely and is therefore a great protection for them, and is known as the Matangulu, the fruit of which—red with black seeds—is very refreshing for the hunter who is overcome with thirst.



On account of the dearth of proper food in the great forest, the elephants raid nightly the native banana shamba. They are not really after the bananas, but their suckers and roots, of which they are very fond. They are also extremely partial to rice at the season when it is about two feet six inches high, just before it ripens, and will risk a lot to obtain it. But a very simple device seems to frighten them off; the natives pass one thin liane about five feet high right round the shamba that they are protecting, and the elephant, coming in contact with this, fears a trap and sheers off. Ground-nuts they also like, and will take bunches of these nuts while they are growing, pulling them up with their trunks by the roots and knocking the earth from them and eating the bunches whole. Their method of getting the palm-oil fruit is also very simple; the big tuskers insert their tusk under the roots and put their weight into it, when down comes an enormous palm. The cows are unable to do this, lacking the length and strength of tusk to get the leverage. When one sees that trees have been knocked down in this manner, one can be pretty certain that there are one or two big tuskers in the herd. Their usual bread and butter is the tips of the young saplings, bunches of which they pull off and put in their mouths.

While on the subject of cows, it is often a moot point whether the elephant ever gives birth to more than one at a time. I have on several occasions seen cow elephants accompanied by two totos of approximately the same size and age, but on one occasion when searching for elephants, one of my men mounted a large tree and told me that he could see a large

solitary bull, and was sure that there were no more. As the elephant was in the *m'teti*—grass about fourteen feet high—it was imperative to make sure of my bearings, so I advanced into the *m'teti* in search of the supposed bull, and by the movements of the tips of the grass was able to locate the animal, but had to get nearly right up to it before I could see the top of its head. I then fired and got the brain shot, the animal falling dead, and I might add that I was very annoyed, as it turned out to be a female, and I never shoot a female if I can possibly help it. On dropping, it fell on two young ones, seemingly about a year old, killing them both dead on the spot.

The above is the only experience I have had of a female elephant with young being unaccompanied by other females in a similar state, their practice being to gather together in small herds varying from about four to five to about twenty or thirty, keeping separate from the big herds and only rejoining them when the young are old enough to travel and keep up with the big herds. Incidentally, I believe that the length of time taken by an elephant to give birth is thirty months from the date of conception, but all the natives I have questioned seemed to be under the impression that they breed every year, and also sometimes have two at a time. It is very amusing to watch a mother playing with her young; she will roll it over and over in the grass, the little one afterwards jumping up and scampering away in great delight.

When elephants are rounding up to take their midday siesta the cows bunch up together whilst the bulls remain on the flanks, usually some distance from



the cows. I have also noticed that the half-grown bulls take up their position apart. In the case of an alarm, when young are amongst the herd one sees the mothers pushing their progeny in front of them with their trunks and hurrying them as fast as possible.

The old bulls are segregated from the females, but I certainly do not believe that they are cast out from the herd. As an instance, the following experience may be quoted. In a certain district in which I was hunting I could not find the spoor of any bull elephants, although there were evidently very many herds of cows, so after four separate days of tramping from the morning to the evening without success, on the fifth day I resolved to follow the first herd of cows I came across to see where they would lead. Striking the spoor of a small herd of cows about 9 a.m.—they were about seven in number, and I followed the spoor all day without once catching sight of them—just before sundown I caught them up as they were standing with a fine big bull which I brought down, his tusks scaling 87 and 85 lb. respectively. My observation is that the old bulls accompany the cows for a matter of an hour or two, and that eventually the cows—which travel much faster, in their feeding making quite a noise as they go along—leave the old bulls behind, which evidently suits the latter, as they seem all for a quiet life, and go slowly from one tit-bit to another, eventually coming to anchor under a favourite tree. They have regular beats, and bull countries are to be found without any permanent herds of cows. The bulls may be solitary or in herds, the largest bull herd

I have come across having been thirty. The young bulls, however, accompany the females.

The term "elephant cemeteries," of which one has heard, is, in a strict sense, incorrect. There are certainly places I know of where elephants go to die, but as these are also favourite breeding places, it seems merely that on feeling death approaching they make for their old home. Many die in the rivers whilst having their customary mud baths. A day comes when they feel too weak to get out, and eventually topple over, to be buried in the mud of the Nile or other large expanses of water. There must be thousands of tons of ivory buried in the mud of the Nile. I happen to know a spot on the flats of that river where a dying elephant or hippo would be automatically buried. I proved this in a case in which I had shot a hippo on my way north, the porters cutting off sufficient meat for their needs, everything else being left, including the teeth, as I could not spare the time to take them out. On returning six weeks later I passed the spot, which I had marked down on my way up, but as there was no sign of the dead hippo, I put my men on to dig, and about three feet below the surface came on the skeleton and extracted the teeth, which of course came out without any cutting.

On another occasion I came on the remains of a herd of fifty or sixty elephants, apparently a "cemetery," but on making inquiries I found this to be the result of a tribal burn of elephants, there being the remains of all sizes, including the very young.

The ivory at breeding and dying grounds one has seldom the luck to come upon, these places being

well known to the natives. One particular spot I have in mind is a rather nice valley, completely sheltered by hills, and having a nice stream of water running through it. While I was camped on the hills overlooking this valley, herds of elephant, including rhino and buffalo, were constantly coming in and out of the valley, usually to rest a day before passing on. It was the sort of spot which, owing to the contour of the country, one was bound to fetch up at if wandering about aimlessly. I mentioned this place to Pearson, telling him that I had seen a lot of dead elephants, but that the tusks had been taken out after death. He told me at a later date that he had been at this place at the grass-burning season and had picked up six tusks, but this must have been more or less of a fluke, the natives, as I say, being generally there first. When the grass is burnt the skeletons and tusks show up quite clearly, and one has only to range the valley with glasses to see them.

## CHAPTER XII

### DANGEROUS GAME

THERE are many opinions as to the most dangerous game to follow, and it generally greatly depends on the individual's personal experience on the subject. One will say rhino and another elephant, and so on; but one must remember that all wild animals are dangerous when wounded, and they are also dangerous in different ways. My experience has been principally with elephants, although on one occasion I managed to kill five lions in one day. Rhinos, when approached properly, seem much easier to kill than elephants, which last I consider the hardest to kill of all wild animals, one that I killed having run a distance of eight hundred measured yards after getting a '450 in the centre of the heart. An elephant, too, is particularly wicked and will try to get the hunter even when mortally wounded.

Lions certainly do not like being chased and will, if followed, round up, either the hunted or the hunter being then "for it." The female seems to have a different mode of attack to the male, she favouring the clawing method, whereas the male comes on in the all-in business, meaning to have a regular clean up. No doubt the human eye acts as a great deterrent to the lion, as an experience of mine will show. On dropping one I went to look for

him in the long grass and came on him crouching flat on the ground. I was at the moment carrying my '450, so, keeping my eyes on him, I called on my gunbearer, who I thought was close behind me, to give me the small rifle. All this time I had my eyes on the crouching lion, who also had his eyes on mine; but having shifted my eyes to glance and see where the gunbearer was, simultaneously the lion sprang at me, dropping immediately in front of me, not more than a yard away. With no use for the small gun now, I shot him with the first barrel in front, a forward shot which had the effect of spinning him round, and the next barrel raking him from behind, killing him dead. It was no doubt the shifting of my eyes that made him charge.

I had another interesting experience with lions, when out to shoot a guinea-fowl or a small buck with the '303. After going about a mile, I put up eleven or twelve lions, so I promptly opened fire, killing four of them and wounding another, which I followed. This latter was a lioness, and on coming up with her in the clump of bush in which she was taking cover she would make a break for another bush. Eventually she made a stand in a clump of bush where one could not see a yard in front, the noise of the firing having in the meantime aroused the natives in the neighbouring villages, who now came up with their chief, mounted on their little ponies. The natives of this part of Africa (Chad), it may be added, own small ponies about the size of Shetland ponies which they ride bareback, not having any saddles or bridles.

The chief introduced himself, and I explained to



him that I had killed four lions and this—the fifth—I was trying to dislodge from the thicket. He thereupon suggested that perhaps I would like to see his men kill the lioness with the spear; and with this appealing to me, thinking I was going to see some really good sport, I told him to carry on, and took myself off a little distance to sit on an ant-hill and give him a chance to organize his men.

They dismounted, and clasping their shields in one hand and spears in the other, were formed by the chief in a half-moon round the thicket, I sitting waiting patiently for the fun to commence. But it was not quite the kind of fun I anticipated. The chief came over and asked me where the spot was that the lioness had hidden herself, and on its being pointed out to him, he said, "Well, that is your position." I said nothing, taking it as a matter of course, as did everybody else, but it seemed so jolly humorous to me, as these people were in no danger whatever.

All being now ready, the chief gave the order for the proceedings to commence, a start being made by the warriors throwing sticks into the bush and using bad language to the lioness, which, becoming fed up, sprang out at her nearest enemy—myself. I luckily shot her on the spring and she fell dead, and as it was now sundown the lioness was being borne back in triumph. A horse had been brought out for me, or somebody went without, I don't know which, so we returned in a cavalcade; but the lions were so numerous that every thicket on our way back showed one poking its nose out and withdrawing it again, the natives being so nervous that the lions



would attack the horses that they insisted on our bunching up together.

On arriving back at the village I found that a Hausa trader with his wife had turned up, carrying his goods on pack donkeys. People made tremendous profits, by the way, on what they sold, the country being so dangerous that very few would take the risk. Their principal commodity was sugar, which they informed me fetched forty francs the kilo (pre-war francs), the sugar being of the solid pyramid variety.

The wife of the trader asked me what was the good of killing things like that, and why didn't I kill them something they could eat. I told her that the next day I would do so, which pleased her very much; and on my killing a buck as promised, she remarked that it must be nice to be able to get meat any time one wanted it.

While on the subject of lions, going down the Chari River I fell in company with a French officer who was going to take up his post as an Administrator of a province midway between Fort Archambault and Lere, about three hundred kilometres west of the Chari River. Getting on very well, we used to go hunting together for a time until he complained that he did not get a chance to show his skill when with me, so afterwards we went out separately; and while going down the river he was very taken with a shot I had made from my *balinière* (whale-boat). I had been dozing under the awning of the boat when I was aroused by firing from the boat in front, and on getting up to see what it was I saw the Captain having target practice at a troop of seven lions which had

been down to the river drinking. He had not succeeded in hitting any of them, and they were now making off to the bush, with the exception of a lioness who was evidently intrigued with the boats and remained behind to watch. Difficult as it is to take steady aim from a rocking boat, I took a shot at her and she dropped.

Pulling ashore, we landed, the Captain going with me to look for the wounded animal, which we came on at about two yards range in the thick stuff, and standing with her mouth wide open, broadside on, her head turned towards us. I immediately fired two shots at the shoulder in quick succession, which seemed to have no effect at all, the bullets, being solid, passing right through the animal. I then gave her one through the head which settled matters.

The Captain thought I was taking big chances, but I told him that I did not think there was much danger, upon which he observed that Prince Boris was of the same opinion, namely, that lions could be shot without any more risk than one would have in shooting native dogs. On my agreeing that that was certainly sometimes the case, we pushed on to Fort Archambault, where I bid good-bye to the Captain, promising to call on him on my way to the Cameroons.

While at Fort Archambault I met that celebrated Latham who made the attempt with Blériot to fly the Channel. Alas ! poor Latham was killed only a few miles from here by a buffalo. I was present at the obsequies.

Some months later I passed through Fort Archambault again on my way to the Cameroons, and came on the Post of Lai, where my friend the Captain had

already installed himself some months before. On getting within a mile of the place I was greeted by some hundreds of natives, who also lined both sides of the street towards the Post. Amongst them I recognized the Captain's personal boy, who greeted me and immediately dashed back to the Post, also thronged with natives when I reached it. After shaking hands with the Captain, I asked him the cause of this ovation, he informing me that the natives having worried him on account of the toll that the man-eating lions were taking amongst them, he had assured them that a great English hunter was coming along who would settle the lion business out of hand.

Well, I gave him my opinion of his arrangements by explaining that I was not greatly struck on lion-shooting at any time, as, after one had shot the animals, one had all the trouble in the world curing the skins ; instancing a case on the road when, the skins having been all spoilt owing to the excessive rains, I gave one to an askari, who sold it to the Arabs as medicine, a piece about four inches square bringing quite a good price. The Captain, however, having declared that it was impossible to disappoint the natives after he had given his word that the lions would be rounded up, it was decided to have a go at them in a couple of days' time. Meanwhile a French sergeant serving under the Captain also wanted to go, but, with his Chief refusing to allow it, I tried to obtain permission for him but without success, being met with the argument that if he got killed or maimed, he—the Captain—would have to keep the man's wife and family for the rest of his life.

We started one evening, travelling on horseback, to pull up about midnight and sleep at a village on the road, our tents having been sent on ahead. The next evening we arrived at the village of the man-eating lions, being met by hundreds of naked natives, all owning several ponies each, and on the following morning the Captain asked me if I would make the necessary arrangements for a drive. So, having gathered about sixty mounted men, we advanced over a great plain in skirmishing order, the Captain and myself in the centre.

We had not gone far when we put up a lioness. I dismounted for a shot, and seeing that the Captain had also dismounted, I asked him if he would like to take the shot, which he said he would, so I mounted again and continued the drive. Shortly afterwards I put up an enormous lion, the skirmishers stopped, and I went after him on foot; but on his discovering that I was following, he turned and came for me with head down and mane up, making his head appear a tremendous size. I went down on my knee, waiting for him, but when he came to within fifty yards, he stopped and had a good look at me, thereafter turning tail and making off. Remounting, together with the skirmishers, we gave chase, but on seeing that we were following he increased his pace and was soon going at a good gallop, soon tiring of which, however, he made for cover when a clump of bushes came into view.

On getting within a couple of hundred yards the skirmishers pulled up and I dismounted, managing to approach to within forty yards, at which he reared up preparatory to charging. I then let go with my

'577 loaded with solids and he dropped, I waiting in the expectation that he would charge; but as he did not I put a fresh cartridge in the gun and warily advanced on him to within twenty yards but without being able to see him. I then called to the mounted men to ride round and get a view of him, obeying which order they began with an enormous wide sweep, gradually lessening the distance until one of the men more plucky than the rest, bending over on his horse, saw the lion lying dead.

At his shout to the others they all came up, their surprise being intense, and every one wanting to have a look at the wonderful gun, which they had never dreamed could kill so enormous a lion with one shot; and, for that matter, the beast turned out to be a record for that part of the world.

I might mention that before going out I had asked them what was going to be done about the lions' skins, as I had had so many spoilt for want of attention, their reply having been that they would carry any lion on the back of one of the ponies to the camp and then properly skin and cure it. As, therefore, this particular lion was as big as their ponies, the joke was on them; and when I reminded them of their promise it created great amusement. They eventually solved the problem by skinning it then and there, its size greatly amazing the Captain on our return, he having only succeeded in bagging the lioness. Envyng my performance, he affirmed his intention of going for bigger game, and suggested that on the following day we should hunt separately. Each taking a flank, therefore, when we went again, the Captain on the left and I on the right, early on we



separated, and on returning at the close of the day, my bag being two lionesses, I found that the Captain had had an adventurous time. Some of his men were limping about the camp, and after a while he showed up out of his tent to explain matters, also exhibiting a fine lion skin, quite a big one, but not quite so big as the one I had shot the day before.

It appears that they had put up his lion as mine had been put up the day before, the beast charging as he fired. He let off his second barrel as the lion came on, but without stopping him, and, as he himself put it, "I would not like to tell any one else, but I ran for all I was worth to save my skin." The lion next got amongst the horses, clawing two of them, and one or two of the natives received minor scratches while the Captain managed to get his gun under way. It took no less than ten shots, he said, to kill the beast, and he was now firm in his opinion that Prince Boris had never seen a lion, which I admitted was quite possible.

The Captain had now had quite enough of lion-shooting and was anxious to get back to his Post; but with the natives clamouring for me to stop, I myself remained for another two days, killing a couple more of the supposed man-eaters. On my way back I left as usual about sun-up and travelled, as was my custom, till about 8 a.m., when I stopped to have breakfast, the porters having half an hour's break before continuing the march.

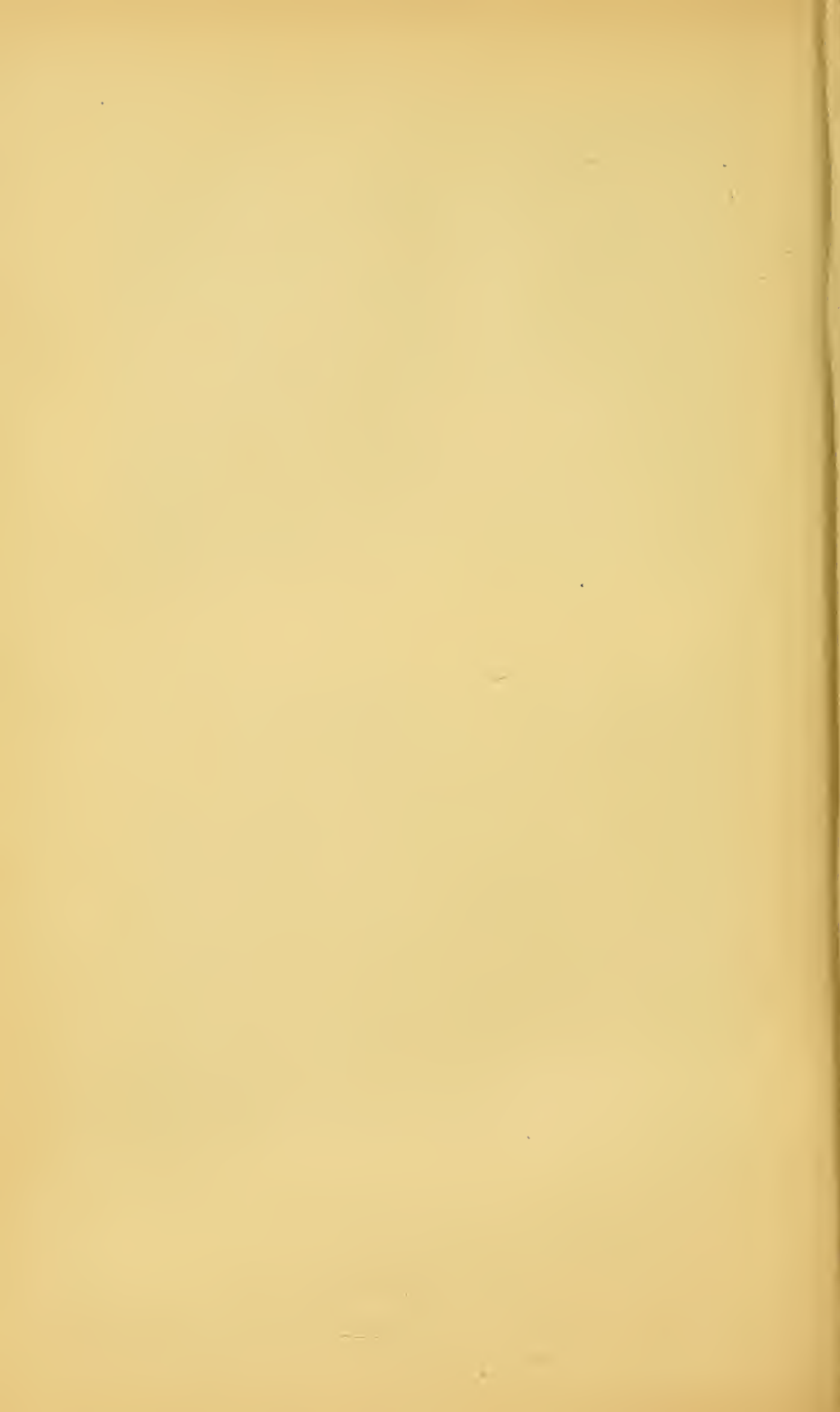
On finishing breakfast I mounted my horse and went slowly ahead, preceded by the guide armed with a spear, not waiting as usual for the gunbearer to go





(Upper) THE HEAD AND TUSKS OF AN ELEPHANT AFTER THE FLESH HAS BEEN REMOVED.

(Lower) A CHARGING ELEPHANT BROUGHT DOWN.



ahead with my rifle. As I mounted I observed that the man was not there, but I went on, and we had not gone more than a mile when the guide stopped dead. On looking ahead for the cause, I saw a big lion in front, standing three-quarters on, with his head facing us and his tongue rolling round his mouth—in fact, smacking his lips. Glancing back for my gunbearer, I saw him running along to catch me up, and beckoned to make him come faster, which he did, but on getting a little closer he also stopped dead, having caught sight of the lion. As he would not come on I got rather annoyed, the lion having a dangerous look, so I started to tell the gunbearer what I thought of him, which had the desired effect, and the gun was soon in my hand. I was so put out by being caught on the hop like that, that I grabbed the gun and let rip at the lion without taking proper aim, and hit him in the stomach, which had the effect of sending him off for about fifty yards. On his coming back again, I again pumped lead into him, but it took the whole magazine of cartridges to bring him down.

Lions I have found similar to a lot of other game. One may shoot quite a number of them without getting any trouble, but a careless shot and a bad lion makes some bad lion.

### BUFFALO

Buffalo are most dangerous, as they seem more prone to attack without provocation than any other animal, but of course one does not know what may have happened in a previous encounter with some

native hunter, the animal having perhaps received a nasty wound which would make him bad tempered on encountering the scent of a human being. However, I have noticed that lone bulls seem to have the fighting spirit when one comes on them, and they are aware of one's presence. In the case of the few chargers I have had they have invariably charged with their heads up and their eyes wide open, which, if the term may be used, makes them doubly dangerous. Their nose, like a bullock's, is very tender, and I know of a case in which a native, attacked by a buffalo which charged out of the bush while he was harmlessly walking along the footpath, eventually beat the animal off by striking him repeatedly on the nose with a knobkerrie.

I met a Belgian prospector in the Congo who told me that on firing at buffalo he was invariably charged. He admitted that he was a rotten shot, and could not depend on where the bullet went, so on firing he always saw that a tree was handy and made for it, his men doing the same. On one occasion, he went on to say, there was no room for him up the tree, it being fully occupied by his porters. He was left strap-hanging on one of the lower boughs, the buffalo charging up to the tree and grazing the lower portion of his back as he was trying to get as far away from the ground and the buffalo as possible. He therefore made it a rule afterwards, when shooting buffalo, to mark out his own private tree, and would tell his men that that was his tree, and nobody else allowed on it. That system, he averred, worked very well, and he had not been caught by a buffalo since.

## RHINO

I have found with rhino that if the wind is right one can go practically right up to them, and also, as with all dangerous game, that the closer one can get to them the better and safer it is, as one can then be more sure of one's shot. I call to mind a rather peculiar instance concerning rhino, which happened whilst manœuvring to get a shot at a bull elephant who was amongst a herd of others. A very inquisitive rhino would come close up and stare at us, and as I could not get out of the beast's way, and not wanting to shoot him, having my eye on the tusker in the herd, I motioned to one of the shenzi trackers who usually accompanied me on my hunting to pick up a large stick about as thick as one's wrist, conveying that I wanted him to hit the rhino while I covered it with my rifle.

The native, tumbling to the idea, gave the rhino a tremendous blow with the stick, which had the effect of so startling the animal that it went off at full lick for about a hundred yards, when it stopped, staring at the place it had come from and no doubt very puzzled. This gave me my chance, and I was able to get the elephant.

Another day, with the aid of the shenzis, I caught a young white rhino, but not having the wherewithal to feed it, I afterwards let it go.

## LEOPARDS

Leopards, if they have turned man-eaters, can be more dangerous at night than lions. For instance,



one evening before camping, I had shot a buffalo, and the meat was brought into camp and cut up, afterwards to be distributed amongst the men, who left a large quantity of bones outside the camp, as I would not allow meat cut up near my tent. Shortly after sundown the guard called my attention to an animal of some sort gnawing the bones. We could hear but not see it, so in order to drive it away I used the shot-gun and fired in its direction, the first two shots having no effect; but the third seemed to have touched it up, as the sound of the gnawing ceased, and the animal went away. I found out next morning that it was evidently a leopard.

On the following morning I sent twenty men out under an askari to cut grass for the mules, the askari rushing back about 10 a.m. to announce that a leopard had taken one of the men. I asked him why, being armed with a rifle, he had not shot the animal, his excuse being that he wanted me to shoot it, but evidently the real reason was that he had the wind up. However, taking my rifle I hurried to the scene of the raid and followed up the retreating spoor of the leopard, which was not difficult, the animal being burdened by the weight of a full-grown man, and on penetrating the undergrowth, which was very dense, I came suddenly on my quarry engaged in eating the man's face. On my approach it sprang into the jungle, whereupon I immediately fired, but I think if I hit it at all I could only have grazed it.

I continued to follow the spoor for quite a time until the blood ceased, when I came to the conclusion that it must have been blood dripping from the animal's jaw that I had been following.



On examining the dead man I found that the entire face had been eaten away, and the peculiarity of the case was that this man had a very fat face with blubber lips. The men had been in one line when cutting the grass, and the animal had singled its victim out from the others evidently for his fatness. After burying the man and returning to camp, I gave orders that that night every one was to make a fire at the doorway of his hut, being perfectly sure that the leopard would return for the interrupted meal. I then placed two guards instead of the usual one, with instructions to fire at the least sign or sound of anything coming into the camp, but on no account to fire at the object but in the air, as I thought it would be an even chance that they would hit one of the porters.

My usual custom was to sleep with the tent open and a man on guard at a fire outside, my position in the tent giving me a view of him. Before turning in I got my bandages, permanganate, etc., ready laid out on the table in case of emergency, and about 4 a.m. I was aroused by the firing off of rifles and the shouts of the men. On getting up to see what had occurred, I found that a leopard had walked over the fire at the doorway of the hut of two of the porters and seized one of them by the throat, this awakening his mate, who shouted. The guards had then fired off their rifles, and the leopard bolted into the undergrowth.

I had the man immediately brought to me and applied first aid, thoroughly syringing the wounds. As a matter of fact, they were quite superficial, the man suffering chiefly from shock, and my attempts

to pull him together and make him laugh were of no avail. In this connection, there is no doubt that once a native loses heart one might as well prepare for his funeral, for as it happened, this particular fellow died the next day without any signs of blood-poisoning or any outward indication to explain his death. A good hiding, probably, would have saved him, but in the circumstances one would not care to adopt that remedy.

In reference to fires as a means of keeping off man-eating lions and leopards my experience is that it does not, but it is certainly a good thing to have a fire if one has a guard as well. I remember once spending a very uncomfortable night in the bush. I had been after elephants the whole day, but although extremely tired I would not give up while there was a chance of coming up with them before dark. Keeping on, therefore, although the sun had set, I was beginning to think I should have to call it a blank when, emerging from a thick patch of forest, I saw two bulls standing together, the herd having evidently gone on. I paused for a moment till one of them slightly moved, giving me my opportunity, and I dropped him dead. With his mate immediately charging, I slipped behind a tree, catching him in the head as he passed, which at the rate he was travelling caused him to turn a complete somersault, and on going up to him I found he was also dead.

Dusk was now coming on, and as we were more than twenty miles from camp and with no food for the gunbearer or native trackers, I ordered a bearer to get some grass to sleep on, and the trackers to get wood and if possible water, while, with one of the

gunbearers accompanying me, I would endeavour to find a small buck before it became too dark. My luck was in, for I had not gone more than a mile when I managed to knock over a small buck, which the gunbearer promptly put on his shoulder, and we returned to our sleeping-spot. Incidentally, it might be interesting to the reader to add that the bearer selected was a Mahommedan, the reason for my taking him being that if he or another of his religion did not cut the throat of the animal it would be unclean and he would not eat it.

On getting back to where I had killed the two elephants, I found that the men had picked a spot some distance away from them, while the other trackers had followed the retreating herd. They came back with some water, but dry wood was very scarce, and most of it was used in cooking the meat, so there was very little left to make the watch-fire. The gunbearers roasted mine on sharpened sticks about two feet long, sticking them in the ground in a slanting position leaning over the fire, the sticks being turned occasionally so that it got properly roasted.

It was now quite dark with no moon, and to make it more dreary rain began to fall. Shortly afterwards came the deep grunts of lions, which, from the different directions of the sounds, indicated a troop of them, so, knowing that fire by itself was no protection from man-eaters, and although every one was dead beat and some of the trackers already asleep before having finished their meal, I ordered one man to keep awake, and when he felt tired to awaken another.

Now, as I before remarked, dry wood was very scarce, the fire, therefore, having to be necessarily small, and I had dropped off to sleep, leaving one man to watch, when I was awakened suddenly by the unmistakable grunt of a lion. As it seemed quite close, in fact I thought it was at my elbow, I started up, to find the fire nearly out and every one asleep, including the man I had left on watch. I woke everybody up, and more wood was piled on the fire, the watchman admitting that he was so tired that he had fallen asleep. It was still raining in a desultory manner, and no doubt the native trackers felt the cold, the only garment they possessed being a loin-cloth about a foot wide, but they were much too tired to be kept awake by cold.

I dropped off again, and don't know how long I had slept when I was awakened again by one of the animals, which seemed no more than a yard away. It was so dark that I could not see farther than the slight glow given out by the fire, and, beginning to get seriously annoyed, I upbraided the men for risking everybody's life by not keeping proper guard; they replied that they were so tired that they could not possibly keep awake.

This sort of thing went on through the whole course of the night, the lions seeming to become more bold as the night went on. There appeared to be so many of them that I thought it was quite possible that they might attempt a raid in force, so I sat up myself to keep the men awake. I might add that the general misery was not alleviated by the fact that we could only spare a stick or so of wood at a time to prevent the fire going out altogether. I was so wild at

getting no sleep that I vowed I would hunt the lions at daybreak, if it took me the whole day to come up with them.

Directly it was light we examined the pug marks, and sure enough one of the pugs of a male lion showed two yards from the sleeping-place of one of the men. Pointing this out to them, I declared that if I had not sat up myself and kept them all awake that fellow would have made a breakfast of one or more of them. I gathered also that there must have been about seven or eight lions around.

We now took up the trail, which was quite distinct owing to the rain that had fallen during the early part of the night, spooring up the lions across some open country with fairly short grass. Presently I saw a large male in the distance roaring and frightening the game, which was now in full retreat, and on passing a bush a lioness sprang neatly on to a running buck and pulled it down. I opened fire on the lioness, bringing her down, after which I followed the male, who, hearing the shot and seeing what was up, was making off. After going a little way he turned round to have a look at me, which gave me the chance to drop him at long range with the .450 solid bullet. By this time, quite a lot of lions had been disturbed by the firing, and I managed to get another lioness before giving up.

On cutting open the animals, I found that all the stomachs were quite empty, proving that it was not curiosity but lack of food that had brought them round our sleeping-place the night before.

The kill was taken by the trackers, and after having skinned the three lions we started on our



march back, arriving at the river this side of my camp about five o'clock in the afternoon, to find that during my absence the river had come down in flood and overflowed its banks. It was now a mighty torrent, twice its usual width, and very deep and rapid. My observations were the more forcible in that the boy showed up on the opposite bank with food which he had brought down with the aid of a porter, and was tantalizingly waving about so that I could see the good things without being able to partake of them. This being too much for me, having had nothing from daybreak that morning, I sent for the chief, who lived about a mile farther down the river. He promptly turned up, and when I put it to him that he must know some way of crossing the river, or how did they manage when the Belgian tax-collector came round, his face broadened and he said there was a way, but it was difficult and risky. I told him that I would risk a lot for a good feed, and that he could see for himself my boy standing there with all the wherewithals for a banquet.

After promising to give him a tip and something each for the men, and that I would be the only person to go across, he sent for his men, who came along with five poles about five feet in length and three inches in diameter, which they proceeded to lash together by means of strips of bark. With the frail structure now having the appearance of a small raft, it was gingerly placed in the water, and I was told to lie face downwards. Thinking it was a toss up whether we got across all right, I took my boots off and had them tied on to the raft in case the whole thing went to pieces or capsized, in which case I



should have some sort of a show of being able to get out.

I was not too greatly surprised when, having lowered myself on to the raft, my full weight made it sink under me, completely immersing me, with the exception of my head, the nostrils being just about flush with the water. I told the old man that I thought that another stick would be advisable, but as he assured me it was quite proper like that, I shut my mouth and held tight.

All being now ready, four hefty men jumped in the water, two at each side of the raft, and putting their weight into it paddled out into the stream for all they were worth. We soon struck the current and then went "some," passing the opposite bank—just visible to me, being low as I was in the water—at a rate which put me in mind of being on an express train passing telegraph poles. With the shenzis working hard all the time we were in the current, where the river made a sharp bend, the two nearest men made a grab at some partially immersed bushes, which, however, came away in their hands. However, it had the effect of slowing us up, whereupon all hands, including myself, were soon clutching at the bushes, which we eventually retained and stopped our mad career.

We had fetched up about a half a mile below our starting-point, amid the shouts of the natives from the bank I had left, who were running to keep up with us, but the raft beat them to a standstill. It was the quickest and most thrilling journey I have ever made. There are a lot of crocodiles in the

river, but I don't think they would have had a chance of catching that raft.

I was very pleased at the success of the crossing, and so were the raft boys when I produced beads for them at the camp, but they would not return back again, saying once was enough, and that the river would probably go down by the next day, which it did. My gunbearers were then able to get across with my lion skins, but as it was the rainy season the skins gave me no end of trouble to prevent their being spoiled.

## CHAPTER XIII

### BENNET'S EXPERIENCE

**B**ENNET was an engineer of the Nile flotilla of steamers plying between Butiaba on Lake Albert and Nimule on the Nile, who became intrigued with elephant-hunting after seeing the results of some of my successful trips into the interior. He therefore resigned his appointment with the Uganda Marine and fitted himself out as a hunter, but the success that he imagined did not come to him, and on his first trip he travelled for six weeks without getting a single head. Eventually he made a trip into Jura's country, Jura being at that time up against the Congo Government and after what has been often designated "the king of Africa"—*i.e.* guns.

Bennet, arriving amongst them, had what Jura lacked, and went through the usual formula of making friends—the natives were extremely friendly and generous, which should have put Bennet on his guard. They brought up quantities of fowls, eggs, honey, and also big lots of beer, which his men promptly started to get away with, after a while beginning to feel the effects, and then without warning the attack came. Most of his men were killed, and the remainder escaped to the bush in the confusion. I, by the way, on passing through this country some months later,

picked up the remnants of his safari, they having been hiding in the bush raiding the shambas at night for food. Bennet, himself, was seized from behind while sitting on his chair, and immediately bound with thongs so tightly that they cut into his flesh. He was afterwards completely stripped, the only thing the natives allowing him being his shirt, but after explaining to them that he would certainly snuff it if they did not allow him his topee, they eventually allowed him that. Taken then before the chief, who questioned him as to where he had come from, where he was going, and what he wanted, etc., Bennet told him that he was an elephant-hunter and was after ivory. After the interview, they outwardly became very friendly, and the chief suggested that they should become blood brothers—*i.e.* make an incision in the arm of each and drink each other's blood. Of course, in the hole he was in, everything was good to Bennet, whose one idea at the time was to get away with his life. He therefore consented, but was kept tied up all the time to prevent his escape.

The ceremony having been duly performed, the chief said, "As we are now brothers, we can proceed to talk business. You want ivory, which I have got, and I want guns, which you have got or can get." He then conducted Bennet to a go-down which was stored with hundreds of tusks of ivory, observing, "Get back, bring the guns, and all this ivory is yours." Bennet naturally agreed, so was led forth in his shirt and hat, but without boots, and was conducted to a hill in sight of the Belgian post of Mahagi, where I afterwards met the lieutenant in charge, who told me

that he was in a terrible state when he arrived. Needless to state, he did not return, and I regret to have to add that the shock he had had was so great that he never properly recovered, and died shortly afterwards.

## CHAPTER XIV

### AN EXPERIENCE AMONG THE LUGWARA

FOLLOWING elephant tracks, rhino paths, and occasionally native footpaths, I was making my way to the east to strike the Nile between Wadelai and Dufie when I had an unpleasant experience among the Lugwara. The period, by the way, I remember well, as during our marches we saw Halley's comet, which was very brilliant in that part of the country, my boy first calling my attention to it by saying, *tazama taa, bwana*—"look at the lamp, sir."

While camped in an open glade surrounded by the forest, I was visited by two white rhinos who came within a couple of yards of the camp fire, the man on guard awaking me so that I had a very fine view of them, particularly as it was bright moonlight. They had magnificent heads, but I refrained from shooting, as I was unable to carry another load, having already discarded chop boxes of provisions to make room for ivory.

The next day, about two o'clock in the afternoon, I came on a village where the greatest amount of excitement was apparent amongst the natives. They began by making an awful din, blowing trumpets about five feet in length which caused the natives from the neighbouring villages to assemble. The



small guide I had with me—he had been captured by an interior tribe and escaped—whispered that we had stumbled on the dreaded Lugwara. I at once saw that we were in a bad fix, as this tribe had only recently attacked and murdered an Italian named Bucheri. Had I been aware that the direction I had taken would have brought me in contact with this tribe I would have altered my direction farther to the south, which would have enabled me to skirt their country. However, there I was, and had to make the best of it.

The chief told me that his name was Auzor. He had with him as lieutenant an enormous man who must have stood seven feet high in his naked feet. I shook hands with the chief and gave him to understand that I was very pleased to meet him, whereupon we parted on terms of apparent friendship, I to look for a place to camp.

A little farther along I spotted an eminence in quite open country, with the exception of a large wild fig tree—a species, by the way, which grows to a great size and bears a fruit similar in appearance to a small guava full of seeds and quite unlike the cultivated variety of fig, the fruit, too, being packed with small black ants which are evidently very fond of it. There I decided to pitch my camp, which seemed to me a strategic position, as it gave me a view of the surrounding country.

While busy on the camp I found these people unduly friendly—from my experience a distinctly bad sign—and pestering me as to what things they could bring me for a present. Incidentally, again, it is customary when travelling amongst uncivilized tribes to take and receive presents, the natives receiving

generally much more than the value of their gifts. It may be added that the practice is taken advantage of by more civilized natives, who will try and insist on one taking a present, but would be very dissatisfied if in return they only received the bare value of their gift. To resume, however. If I wanted eggs, away went four or five people to get them, and so with other things also. They asked me if I wanted beer. I told them no, but the beer arrived just the same, six large calabashes full, another suspicious circumstance, as natives as a rule do not throw their beer about in this manner. I suspected, moreover, that it was drugged, the quantity being obviously much more than I should need for myself, and their idea being that I would give it to the gunbearers and porters. However, I did nothing of the kind, but kicked the stuff over when nobody was about.

I could clearly see that under this ostentatious friendship there was mischief, as I had by this time a pile of eggs about two feet high, and I had already remonstrated with them about bringing so much food, telling them that I was unable to carry it. To prevent them bringing any more, I had for some time ceased to give them any payment for what they had brought up, which, in an ordinary way, would have effectually stopped it, but with no stopping these people, I came to the conclusion that they were only loaning them to me and counted on getting them all back. Nor was my guide, a small youth, deceived by this outward show of friendliness—with tears in his eyes averring that we were all as good as dead meat. I told him not to be afraid, jokingly saying that when he saw me get frightened he had leave to follow suit,

but that meanwhile he was to return to the branches of the tree where he had been perched and talk to them nice and friendly, he being the only one of the safari who could talk to these natives.

Some six to seven hundred natives must have been gathered round the tent by this time, their ostentatious friendship beginning to take a boisterous turn amongst the porters. Their *modus operandi* was to bring something up to trade with—flour, etc.—and while the porter was producing the goods to barter with him the shenzi would snatch something belonging to the porter and make off, taking away also what he had brought with him as well. This was considered a great joke, causing much mirth amongst the shenzis.

I, being in my tent, was not supposed to know what was going on, and I purposely did not show myself, as I was in hopes that after they had had their joke they would depart; but when they started on my cook, pinching the chicken I had bought from them, I realized that things were now taking a serious turn, this being without doubt meant as an insult to see how far they could go.

I decided, therefore, that the best thing to do was to put up a big bluff, to which end I went outside the tent and began to shout in a loud voice, ordering the multitude of shenzis off, at the same time stationing the gunbearers at intervals in front of the camp, with orders to march up and down and not to allow any one to pass a certain defined line. I then sent for the chief in order to go into the matter of the chicken.

Another extremely suspicious circumstance had occurred just previously, two Lugwara natives having

asked me to sign them on as porters. I had never heard of this tribe taking to any sort of work, especially the job of carrying loads, so, not to make them think that I tumbled to what they were after, I took out my book and solemnly signed them on. When I ordered all the natives out of camp these two wanted to remain, ostensibly to carry my loads in the morning, but really, of course, to act as spies. I told them that that was impossible, they being of a different tribe to the others, and so could not occupy the same tent ; to which they could offer no objection and left rather disappointed, I thought.

The chief turned up later, he being the same man I had seen earlier in the day. He brought the chicken with him, expressing his commiseration at what had happened, and after shaking hands withdrew, the other natives straggling off after him. However, a nod being as good as a wink to a blind horse, it was not my intention to sleep at this camp, and I was certain that they expected all those eggs, together with a caravan loaded with ivory, to be theirs before morning. The camp, therefore, being clear of natives, I reconnoitred the position and could see my position exactly by the mountains that acted as a landmark, especially one large mountain (*jebel wadi*). Unfortunately, however, my direct line of march was so densely populated with native villages that it was out of the question to proceed that way, so I was forced to decide on a southerly route, with the intention of bearing sharply to the east at daybreak.

Everything was now quiet, and the natives having all gone home and the porters having cooked and eaten their food, I also had had my dinner, after which

I called up the gunbearers, the cook, and the guide, and, to their immense relief, gave orders to march at once. My tent was pulled down without the slightest noise and packed, and when everything was ready the porters were summoned and told on no account to speak, but quietly to gather up their loads and leave their fires burning. The night was pitch dark, no moon or stars showing.

Adjuring the porters not to lose touch with each other or they would be irretrievably lost and killed by the shenzis, we started, the small guide with his bare feet on the footpath facing south, so that he could feel the track although he could not see it. Where there were branching tracks he was to signal me to that effect, and I would then get down to the ground and by striking matches and the aid of a compass would indicate which path he was to follow.

We travelled in this manner till just on three o'clock in the morning, losing half the safari at one period of the night, and fortunately, by means of whistling, etc., managing to round them all up again. It was extremely awkward travelling, as every now and again we would bump into a village, whereupon my guide—always first to see them—would whistle softly and we would make a detour to avoid awakening the inhabitants. We were on ploughed land—as I could feel with my boots on—and with no possibility of the natives we had left being able to track us, I gave the order to halt and put loads down and slept, I myself intending to mount guard and wake them at daylight.

At the first streak of dawn, awaking the sleeping safari, I observed through the gathering daylight



that every ant-hill in the distance had one or two natives on top peering for our safari, quite enough evidence to convince me that they had been at the old camp during the night, to find the birds flown. I marched due east, seeing that another fifteen or twenty miles would take me out of this country. There are several chiefs, and what would have been lawful for one to do in his own particular district would not have applied to a district ruled over by another, who might have had different views on the subject. Those I met, therefore, were not openly inimical, though thousands of armed natives were lined on the hills. However, I had to make the best of it. The porters, too, needed a rest, so about 8.30, after we had been going for some three hours, I espied a little farther along a small hill, and decided to have breakfast.

We were accompanied now by some hundreds of natives with their chiefs, all continually arriving to shake hands, which apparent friendliness made me note inwardly that if I managed to get out of this situation I would shake hands with myself by way of a change. I posted two gunbearers by my side, and told the guide to inform too effusive visitors that it was not customary for white people to shake hands while at meals. Incidentally, I might mention that my gunbearers each carried three bandoliers of bristling cartridges, which display I have found has a very impressive effect on natives, as they seem to think that every cartridge has its billet, and make no allowance for misses.

After half an hour's halt I ordered the porters to pick up their loads and continue the march. We



had now to pass through a densely populated part of the country, but on pushing on, I found that all the villages were evacuated, the men with their spears and bows and arrows lining the hills in thousands, though where the women and children were I did not see. Calves and goats were wandering about apparently without owners or herdsmen, but on looking through my powerful Zeiss field-glasses I could discern armed natives lying in the long grass, and doubtless hoping that I would attempt to drive off their apparently ownerless stock, which would have given them the excuse that they wanted to attack the safari. As they numbered about a thousand to one, they would then have had an easy chance of collaring a caravan of ivory, of which they very well knew the value. Everything, in fact, was at a very high tension, and I felt sure it was touch-and-go whether they attacked or not; but it had evidently been arranged amongst the chiefs that an excuse was essential before an attack could be made by the folk of any one district; our modicum of safety lying in the fact that they were jealous of one another and against sharing the loot.

We had now left the villages, and were nearing the outskirts of the Lugwara country when we came on a river which had a most tortuous course, having separate streams, with islands of bush in the centre. This was an ideal place for an attack, for when the porters entered the river they got lost, and I observed, from the elevated position I had taken up with the idea of covering the safari as they crossed, that some of the porters were going north and some south, instead of making directly for the opposite bank. I therefore called out to them, but as they replied that

they had lost their way and could not find the track, I leapt into the river, made a dash for the opposite bank, and blew my whistle. The gunbearers shouted to the porters for the direction, and eventually I got them all safely on the opposite bank. This ideal spot for a surprise attack I have no doubt had served that purpose many times before, these people being always at war with the Belgians, and had never been conquered by them. However, this time the attack was not made, and the porters got on the track again—a path made by the natives on their way to the Nile.

I had now arrived practically on the edge of the Lugwara country, and about noon sighted the outpost village, which did duty as an intelligence post; that is to say, it gave warning of any Belgian punitive expeditions coming along. Halting about a mile from this village, I passed it later on in the afternoon, and with great relief, out of this hostile country. The Nile natives thought it a great performance to have safely passed the dreaded Lugwara, and were continually talking about it amongst themselves, I with a strong inclination to agree with them.

The next day I arrived on the Nile and met the Count of Turin with a Belgian lieutenant and two hundred soldiers as an escort. They also were greatly surprised at my safe passage, the Count observing that he also would like to go that way. Accordingly, he left me to discuss the matter with the lieutenant, who later came over to see me; but when I gave him an account of my trip, he said that he could not possibly risk it, having had strict instructions to avoid the Lugwara country. I told him that with his two hundred soldiers I had no doubt he would get through

all right, though I thought the natives would give him a little sport. But he was taking no chances, and I think exaggerated the danger to the Count, for the latter, when I saw him again, marvelled more than ever that I had got through. He was scarcely less puzzled when I told him it was because I had no soldiers, and we left it at that, he to continue his journey northward and I in the opposite direction.

## CHAPTER XV

### GUNS, TRAPS, AND TRACKERS

A FEW words on firearms might prove interesting, as when going after dangerous game it is essential to have a good rifle, which one can depend upon to do what is required when in a tight corner. Relying on my rifle instead of my legs has saved my life on many occasions.

I have at different times used most of the bores in common use, from the .280 to the .600 cordite. The .280 Ross rifle was a wonderful killer of rhino ; in fact, one could rake the animal fore and aft, but it was not so deadly with the elephant, as the bullet used to split up in contact with the hard, bony substance of the head, and then, again, with its small bore absolute accuracy was essential.

In the thick jungle, where one only gets a glimpse of the animal for a moment, give me the .577 double-barrelled cordite rifle, with 100 grains of cordite and a 750-grain bullet, as it has the shock and stopping powers which is absent in the small bores. On the other hand, it is so heavy that it has to be entrusted to a gunbearer, and is not always available at the moment it is required.

The .500 or the .450 make the happy medium,

With the small bore one can be very accurate if able to see the game clearly, but in the case of a real charger it is a broken reed, as one can scarcely see more than the top of his head when he is coming for you in the long grass.

### NATIVE TRAPS

Natives kill most of their elephants by means of traps, the most common being the overhead spear, which is a heavy bar of iron flattened out at the end, and in appearance is something like a mining drill. It is inserted in a section of a tree about ten feet long and six inches in diameter, and suspended from a tree or two trees growing close together each side of the track where the animal habitually takes his walks. A liane is fastened from tree to tree connected with the overhanging log, the liane being erected at about the height of a man's neck, so that one has to be careful in travelling through the forests, as in places these are very numerous, and one has only to press the liane to release the log with the pointed iron and bring down the log, weighing about half a ton.

I have noticed repeatedly, when following the spoor of elephants, how an animal will go right up to a liane and stop short, to move on round the tree, leaving the track to do so. This cautiousness, I believe, is due to the scent of the natives being left behind when erecting the trap. The same reason, I should say, applies in respect of their game-pits, which are splendidly made; and many times I should have fallen down them if it had not been for the

elephant leaving the track at a sharp angle, which caused me to pause and wonder at the reason for the abrupt move, thereby discovering a trap pit. They are splendidly covered with leaves, so as to be indistinguishable from the surrounding country.

Another method is the suspension of the log spear high up on one of the gigantic fig trees, under which the elephant comes to take his midday siesta. A native climbs the tree and waits for the elephants to come under it, the weighted spear being suspended from a great height and requiring quite a degree of marksmanship to cut the liane at the moment when the elephant is exactly underneath the spear. To make a clean kill the spear has to fall at the junction of the shoulders and the neck, and if that is done the animal will be pierced through the heart and falls dead. The native who is successful in performing the feat in the portion of the country where it is practised becomes king of the elephants for that year, any other natives making a kill having to give one tusk to the elephant king.

As to other traps, the natives of Karamoja have a system of a hubless wheel, a hollow being scooped out of the ground on the elephant's track, and a wheel inserted over the hole. Small sticks are then put in as spokes, and around the wheel is a running noose fastened to a fallen tree. On stepping on the inside of the wheel the animal's foot sinks, and owing to the spokes he is not able to withdraw it immediately, the noose in the meantime tightening around the small part of the foot. The animal then starts to make off, dragging the heavy log, which eventually



so tires him out that he becomes an easy prey to the natives with their spears.

### NATIVE TRACKERS

One often finds amongst natives some great boasters of their prowess in killing elephants. I call to mind an occasion when I could not get natives in the big forest to follow a spoor, and appealed to the chief, asking him if he had a man with sufficient pluck to follow an elephant. He produced a man who claimed that he had killed elephants with the spear, but that turned out to be only in his imagination. He repeatedly went through the performance of stabbing an elephant to death, but on putting him to the test he turned out to be an arrant coward. There happened to be a big bull elephant raiding the sham-bas nightly, and on going after him and getting within reasonable distance of where he would lie up for the day, the braggart invariably lost the spoor. On my recovering it for him, he would, in a few minutes, lose it again till, getting fed up, I had to return to camp.

One day I caught him out while searching the forest for elephants. Hearing one about a hundred yards away, I immediately went to the spot, to find that the animal had moved off. His spoor, however, was quite fresh, so I put the man on it, and was actively engaged looking through the thick bush to get a glimpse of the beast when I found that my man had left the fresh spoor and was following another a day old.

On getting a spoor, by the way, I used to measure

it with a stick from heel to toe, so that, in the case of other elephants being about, I could tell the one we should be following.

With the man flatly refusing to follow the right spoor, I became really annoyed, asking him what he meant, and reminding him how he had bragged of his tracking capabilities and elephant killing with a spear. As he merely replied lamely that one must not follow close behind an elephant, that finished it, and telling him plainly that I was in the habit of getting right on their tails, I sent him home.

Most of the natives in the big forest were very frightened of elephants, and would endeavour to leave the spoor with any excuse. For instance, on encountering the spoor of wild pigs, they would always try and prevail on you to leave the elephant and follow the pigs. Of course they are very fond of pig meat, but there is nothing extraordinary about this, as I have yet to find the meat that they are not fond of. Where the natives of the big forest are concerned, I have found that those who seemed very brave with elephants had had no experience of a bad one. "Fools step in where angels fear to tread." I call to mind one native who seemed exceptionally daring, and would crawl with me in the dense bush right under the animals, and I certainly considered that this man had guts until one day on coming on a herd of elephants in the open which had drifted into the thick stuff. As this prevented me from being able to pick out a big tusker, I sent some of my men round the other side of them, with orders to climb one of the trees, and then shout so that the elephants would

be driven back on to me again. Most of the herd passed about a hundred yards from my position—an ant-hill—but one bull came out and stood some thirty yards away, and commenced turning round and round, evidently trying to find out where we were, and looking very angry. His tusks would not have scaled more than twenty pounds each at the outside, and as he would not leave, I shouted at him, which, instead of driving him away, made him turn and face us.

I told the tracker in question to break a piece of wood off the bush and throw it at him; but this was more than the dignity of the elephant could stand, and with a roar he charged, whereupon I let go at him in the head, not meaning to kill him, for if I had done so it would have counted on my licence. However, the shot failed to stop him, and he charged right up to the ant-hill. I had hit him again and he had gone down, when another elephant—a bull—that I had not seen, dashed out from somewhere, put his tusks under him, and had him up like a flash, and the next minute they were gone. The other bull had similar size tusks to the other, and I should imagine that they were brothers and had been brought up together.

This is the only instance in my experience of one bull coming to the assistance of another bull. Of course, when the elephant charged up to the ant-hill he was only about a yard or so from us, but it put the tracker and the shenzis in a first-class funk. The shenzis decided at once for home and went, the tracker observing that it was a terrible elephant, and he had never seen anything like it before. I thereupon

told him that there was nothing particularly unusual in the experience, and went on to relate one or two of the close shaves I had had, after which he became very tired of elephants and would constantly lose the spoor. He further informed me that he had orders from his chief not to take me into bad country, and that as this was bad country, if I insisted on remaining he would be forced to go back. Eventually, after losing him altogether one day, I told him that he had better return to his chief, which he did.

On another occasion, my gunbearer having gone down the Aruwimi River to get some duck for the pot, a native arrived and said that he had found the fresh spoor of the tracks of an elephant. The old spoor of the beast, by the way, I had pointed out to the natives about a week before, promising a reward should any one come on the fresh one, and immediately notify me; and I might add that the foot measured twenty-four inches from heel to toe, inside measurement, which was abnormally large for that part of the country, as an ordinary good bull's foot would go about eighteen inches.

After asking the chief, at whose village I was camping, if anything had been seen of my gunbearer, and he had made inquiries of the assembled natives to find that he had not been seen, I was about to take my tent boy when the chief said, "No, don't do that; I have a very good man here, an old soldier, who knows all about hunting."

I asked the man if he understood the gun that he was going to carry, which he said he did, and having also asked him if he got nervous when close to





(Upper) THE AUTHOR IN THE JUNGLE.

(Lower) PREPARATIONS FOR DEPARTURE TO THE COAST WITH  
IVORY TUSKS.





elephants, "Oh," he said, "you carry on, and you will see what sort of man I am; why, I am afraid of nothing!" To which I replied that he was the very man I wanted, and away we went.

We had quite five miles to go, and on arriving in the vicinity we met two natives who conducted us to the shamba that the elephant had raided the night before. On measuring the footprints I found that they were not those of the elephant I wanted, as they measured only eighteen inches, and as a matter of fact they turned out to be those of the mate of the big one. However, being there and the foot a fair size, and the natives having told me that he had not gone far away and would return again at sundown and raid the shamba again, I followed his spoor into some very thick stuff called *matangulu*, a long reed-like plant which grows very closely together, and has a bulb-like root, red in colour, with black seeds inside and incidentally very useful to the hunter caught out in the forest without water, as it is very acceptable as a means of allaying thirst.

There was a defined track leading to where the elephant was feeding, but all around thick impenetrable bush for anything except an elephant, so coming to the conclusion—the wind being right—that he would presently wend his way towards the shamba, the gunbearer and I sat down to watch him. He seemed oblivious of our presence and went on feeding, but without exposing himself to a vital shot, when, without the least warning or sound, he suddenly wheeled round and came straight at us. I sprang up and fired at his head—although I could only see a black mass—and that stopped him. I quickly gave

him another, and he fell over, not two yards away ; but he was not dead, and kept on waving his trunk from side to side, smashing the *matangulu*, which was very dense where he fell, and in a bit of a depression, which precluded me from being able to see a vital spot.

I tried to get farther away from him, but could not owing to the awful prickly thicket, so I threw myself on the ground and wriggled as far out of his reach as possible, and remained there. The elephant after a while got up, but as I still could not see a vital spot to shoot at, being also so close and the animal so fierce, I would not risk a shot. Presently he moved slowly off, and in a few seconds was swallowed up by the dense jungle.

I now searched for the soldier, who had taken to his heels when the elephant charged, and finding him with the two natives we had met previously, I inquired why he bolted when the elephant charged. He gave me the usual answer that he thought that was the proper thing to do ; but after thinking it over, I noticed that when we sat down to watch the elephant he squatted on the track we had followed, no doubt to be ready to bolt at the first sign of danger. I was very badly cut about by the terrible thorns, but would not abandon the chase whilst the sun was still up, so we followed a heavy blood spoor till night, and then returned to a village, where I spent a rather uncomfortable night on a native chair. I spent the next day tracking the animal, but it turned out to be the same old thing—every one had heard about the man-killer, and either could not or would not keep to the spoor.

After a whole day's abnormally slow tracking, I reached where he had crossed a deep river which we ourselves were unable to cross, so I asked if there was not possibly a native bridge. They declared that there was not, so, much to the relief of the trackers, I had to return, but I afterwards found out that there *was* a bridge not far from the place.

Shortly after this my gunbearer left me, and being without a regular man, I used to ask the chief of the district in which I happened to be hunting if he had a "Fundi"—a name given to an expert hunter. Nearly all the chiefs had one or two Fundis to shoot game for them, and all of these—from accounts principally given by themselves—were the "it" as regards elephants, but really that was the last thing they wanted anything to do with, although as keen as mustard on wild pigs or any sort of antelope. All these Fundis were very quick on their pins, and if one looked the village natives over and saw a man who was evidently a bit of a runner, one could be quite sure that he was a Fundi. I might add that the reason I had to get rid of my usual gunbearer was that he funked badly the twenty-four-inch-foot elephant, and would always endeavour by some means or other to avoid following him.

Well, the next applicant who came up for the job was a tall, thin fellow, whom I should have picked out as a sprinter from the start. I asked him his usual mode of procedure when getting close to the elephant, that is to say, did he run first and then shoot, or shoot first and then run; but as he told me that he did neither, but always stood fast, I replied that that certainly would be a change. So we left this village,

and went two days into the forest looking for elephant tracks, coming on plenty of cow tracks, but no sign of bull. I decided, therefore, to follow some of these cow tracks in the hope of cross-tracking a bull, but without success. We came only on a small herd of cows, one of the animals standing entirely apart from the others, and I was intrigued to discover if it was not probably a bull. At that moment the Fundi also caught sight of the elephant, and without more ado made one spring of about ten feet, which landed him on the other side of a big tree, the effect of the movement and the noise made thereby being to stampede the whole herd. I remonstrated with the man for performing handsprings when in close proximity, but he was at no loss for an excuse. He had got out of the way, he said, to give me a chance to shoot!

As a refreshing change to all these runners, let me now tell of a stonewaller. I had at one time an excellent gunbearer and right-hand man for my safari—a Nubian ex-sergeant who had served under Emin Pasha. He seemed to have no fear of elephants whatever, and in the case of a charger always stood his ground, wherefore we had no unfortunate incidents such as happened so frequently with the other self-styled gunbearers. He was also everything that could be desired in a dangerous country, having that rare quality, tact, which enabled him to get on excellently with the natives we came amongst who, in some cases, had not seen a white man before. On my taking him down to Entebbe and paying him off and giving him a good bonus as well, he told me that if I ever went up again he would like to go

with me. I assured him that I would be pleased to have him, and gave him a good chit, mentioning his excellent qualities.

I left for England, and, on returning to Entebbe, looked up Sururu, asking him if he would like to go on another shoot, but to my surprise he said he was now frightened of elephants. On my reminding him of his fearlessness on our previous safari, he said, "No, Bwana, I was not then afraid, but after you left Uganda I showed your chit to a Bwana here, who asked me if he took out a licence to shoot two elephants would I shoot them for him, and he would give me fifty rupees for each elephant, and if they were big ones, something more as well. I accepted the Bwana's offer, and he supplied me with a double-barrelled gun like your '577, and I went after them, but, Bwana, I had no luck, and could not kill them, and the last elephant I fired at charged me. I fell down, and the elephant galloped over me, just missing me with his feet, but nearly blinding me with the earth and dust as he went over me, so that is why, Bwana, I will not go after them any more. I think, perhaps, Bwana, that the gun was no good, although it was exactly like your '577, and I had the same ammunition."

He evidently did not realize the one thing that he had not—namely, myself—and his explanation will give the reader some idea of a gunbearer's mentality.

### ELEPHANT MEAT

On going to shoot for the first time in the French Congo, I met two French hunters who instilled into



me that I must on no account give the natives the meat free, as their custom had been always to sell it, so I told them that I would not let them down, and that I also would sell it. When shooting my first elephant, therefore, I got down to it, and started the butchery, although I did not get the mad rush of natives with five-franc pieces—known there as a Pata—which I was led to expect.

In the first place, the men are *poshoed* (rationed) on the elephant, and after a shenzi has cleared off with a foot, another has dragged away an enormous ear, and every one has bagged something, there is about a thousand pounds' weight of elephant meat left for distribution. This proceeds amidst tremendous excitement and noise, to say nothing of a continuous fight with the shenzis and my men. Meanwhile, the women wait around with enormous baskets, a piece of meat flying amongst them every now and then when the husband of a woman engaged in cutting up the carcase is trying to throw a lump of meat at his wife, so that she can stow it away in her basket. In the end, despite the attempted prevention of the porters, baskets all get filled and everybody is satisfied.

On my going up to the Capita and asking him how the sale had gone, he showed me one franc, seven eggs, informing me that there is also five francs' worth on tick! Add that together with a headache I have got from the noise, and you have the sum-total of my first day's business as a butcher.

The disposal of the meat we smoke and dry is an equally amusing, troublesome, and unprofitable matter.



Sticks and saplings having been cut down, these are sunk in the ground, with sticks lashed across the whole, forming a gigantic grid about three feet high. A fire is then lit underneath the grid, lumps of meat weighing from three to five pounds being placed on the top, and the whole is smoked, taking about three days to complete the operation. I started with about a thousand pounds' weight of meat, though I believe there should have been at least about double the quantity, and when the drying process was completed the amount had mysteriously shrunk to about three hundred pounds. It was explained to me that meat in drying lost weight, but that did not explain the number of pieces also shrinking. However, eight loads of meat were sent into the Post, which fetched twenty-eight francs, so the result of the butchery experiment was twenty-nine francs, four fowls, and seven eggs! About what it amounted to was that I had a lot of trouble, and the whole safari seemed flush of money where there was none previously, cards being the order of the day amongst the porters, and as to the remaining five large pieces of meat—well, they were pinched the next night!

I now breathed freely, hoping I should never have to go through it again, but I had to repeat the formula many times before I left the country. It is a nerve-racking business. Every now and again a man will rush up to the tent saying that all hands are fighting and killing each other, then every one has to be calmed down so far as that is possible, most of them being unmanageably excited, covered in blood, and the ground in the immediate vicinity a quagmire.

I saw one man dash in with his knife and commence to cut off a joint for himself while another man was banging him over the head with a stick, but the man stuck to the meat in spite of a battered head, and carried off his joint in triumph.

## CHAPTER XVI

### QUEER CHARACTERS I HAVE MET

WHILE travelling up the Oubanghi twenty years ago, when that region was much wilder than it is at the present day, after passing the Post of Lukolela the steamer anchored for the night at the place of an old Frenchman, to whom I was introduced by the captain of the steamer. After shaking hands, he told me that he was very pleased to meet an elephant-hunter, as he was one himself, having arrived in the country twenty years before in an English sailing-ship. He was at the time I met him engaged in shooting elephants for the French Government, who were putting up a wireless telegraph installation, the meat being required for the native labourers, and he with the contract to supply the meat at five francs the kilo.

He told me that it was quite a paying proposition—and it must have been, as he said he averaged a thousand kilos an elephant, and he had shot two that day; so what with the meat and the ivory he must have done pretty well.

He also owned a ten-ton steamboat, with which he used to journey up and down the river. But the most extraordinary thing about the man was his house, which was built of brick in a clearing of the virgin forest, the whole house being lit with electricity,

he having a dynamo, which he started up for my special benefit. There were over two hundred lights in the house, and some hundreds all round the verandah in close proximity, the kitchen and out-buildings being also lit up, as were the trees which surrounded the clearing. The effect was bizarre, and gave one the impression of the Crystal Palace. The captain of the steamboat and I had dinner with him, he during the meal regaling us with his former adventures as a hunter in the Congo Français. He bewailed the fact that he was now getting too old, as otherwise he would have liked to accompany me.

Another French hunter up there was a very big man, about six feet six inches in height, and very eccentric in that he did not wear nether garments, dressing only in his shirt, hat, and boots. He had no tent or any of the usual paraphernalia such as a bed, table, etc., his rations consisting principally of absinthe and sugar. When these were finished he came back and revictualled. Unfortunately, he was killed by an elephant putting its tusks through his stomach, surviving a whole week in this terrible condition at the Mission Station, where he was taken. He had over a ton of ivory at the time of his death.

Yet another queer character was an Italian, who ran a hotel in Uganda, at which I used to put up on my way up and down country. On the journeys down, seeing the quantity of ivory I had, he would turn to me and remark that hunting was a "gift." I assured him that any one could do it; that one had only to find the elephants, give them a smack by the ear-hole, and there you were! He agreed that it seemed quite easy, and when I again stayed with him on

my way up, he was very interested in all the intricacies pertaining to elephant-hunting, as, for instance, the exact spot where one must hit the animal to get the brain. He rather fancied that shot, being impressed by the fact that one cartridge only was required if put in the right place.

He now purchased some rifles and got a target with the diagram of an elephant drawn on it, I pointing out the brain shot, after which he used to go with his boys into the forest and stick the target up against a tree to practise that particular shot. After a while, when he considered that he and his boys were proficient—he was not going hunting alone, but they should all have a go, and between them something ought to happen to the elephant—he started up country to the Lado Enclave with quite an armed party and, on arriving at the last British Post on the Nile, sent over a message to the Belgian Post, saying that he was a hunter, and under what terms would he be allowed to shoot elephants. The answer came back, “Halves”—half to the hunter and half to the State—but as he was an experienced hunter and there were elephants close by, they thought it would be a good thing if the personnel of the Belgian Post joined him for a shoot together, halving the proceeds. This seemed all right to the Italian, as he knew nothing about it, and thought he might gain some experience from them, the situation being no less humorous from the fact that the Belgians knew nothing about it also, and likewise thought to learn something from the Italian.

Everything being arranged, they all met at an appointed spot on the West Nile, “present and

correct" being the *Chef de Poste*, a short stout fellow with baggy trousers, a big Swede who was lieutenant in charge of the troops, and had brought with him twenty native askaris armed with Albini rifles, a *sous-officier*, and last but not least, the Italian. The herd of elephants had already been located by the shenzis, the Italian in the meantime keeping his end up by retailing all he had heard from other people as his own knowledge—all of which went, of course, to his greater credit as a mighty hunter.

The *Chef de Poste* was in charge of the lunch basket, and after two or three apéritifs and a bottle of eau-de-vie, the whole outfit, including askaris, marched on the elephants' position. On coming within range, the askaris, who were scattered all over the place, opened fire, which naturally put the elephants in a commotion and running in all directions, the hunters themselves getting all mixed up with the askaris and not knowing what to do next. The Italian took cover down an ant-bear hole; the Swede threw off his tunic and, with his sleeves rolled up, put in some heavy work, letting go at every and any thing he could see; the *Chef de Poste*, seeing an opening in the rear, made for it with his lunch basket, and was not seen again; and the lieutenant and his askaris kept up a heavy fire till there was nothing more in sight.

After the Italian had come out of the ant-bear hole and the argument had finished as to why he was there, they went to look for the dead elephants; but there were none—and as neither was there any lunch, they parted with mutual recriminations.

The Italian, when telling me the story, said: "Now, about that earhole shot—it's an impossibility.



I never actually saw it done, though I did see their enormous ears waving about. Anyway, I don't think that is the sort of business for me, and I would not go near them again for a thousand pounds." After that he sat down on the British side and dealt in ivory, and in the case of any one down and out he would loan them a rifle and ammunition for a percentage of the spoil. He was very concerned on one occasion when telling me of a man to whom he had lent the '600 double-barrelled rifle he had bought from me a year before. It was not right, he said, that the man should have used up all the ammunition to secure only one small pair of elephant tusks. "Well," I replied, "he had certainly a very different idea to yours. He went up in the air, and you went to ground."

A particularly hard citizen was old Joe, in the Manyema country of the Belgian Congo, whom I met when he was engaged in trading with the natives for food-stuffs and ivory—particularly ivory. Joe, who came up from the Transvaal and was called by the Belgians a Transvaller, told me that when he entered the country at Elizabethville the Immigration Officer asked him if he could speak French. On his replying in the negative, "Oh," said the officer, "this is a French-speaking country, and if you want to enter here you should be able to speak the language." "What!" exclaimed Joe indignantly. "I served for four years on the Western Front, and they never said a word about it!"

Joe was always at loggerheads with the Government, as they suspected him of shooting more elephants than he was allowed on his licence. As a matter of fact, he had once or twice overstepped the

mark, and the Government at one time had confiscated his guns and refused to renew his licence ; but on his plea that he could not go into the bush unarmed while practically every other native was armed with a muzzle-loader, he had been returned one gun.

He knew this part of the country thoroughly, and also all the chiefs living there, the natives knowing him by the name of *Bwana Fundi*—Bwana the hunter. He had every chief at his finger ends, the size of his particular district, the number of able-bodied men he had, and the amount of produce he would have for sale at the end of the season, to say nothing of the approximate number of tusks he had hidden away.

Well, I had arranged to go out for a shoot with Joe, as he promised to put me on some big ones. He impressed on me that we must start very early, as the elephants make for the water at about five o'clock in the morning ; and on my querying this information, he said they went for safety, lying in the swamps the whole day, to come out again at night. I told him that was most extraordinary ; that I had been hunting for thirty years, had never known them act in that way, and that he was perhaps mixing them up with hippos. He was quite correct, however, that being actually their custom.

Joe arrived at my tent at 4 a.m., when it was still quite dark, and it was as much as I could do to get him to stop for a cup of coffee. I shoved a handful of ground nuts in my pocket, noticing that he himself had a large plantain sticking out of his, and this he told me was what he usually took with him for food. Away we went, then, with his tracker in the lead, the

latter after about half an hour making for the water, which at that time of the morning is very cold, and varying in depth from the ankles to the waist. This went on for a couple of hours without striking a spoor of any sort, and getting rather fed up with it I asked the gunbearer (tracker) if he could not get out of the water for a spell by way of a change, to which he made no reply, seeming hurt, and kept right on.

Shortly after, the water became muddy, the elephants having passed from the dry land to the swamps, so we went back on their spoor until we reached the dry land, and were able to examine the footprints; but as there were no tracks of bulls amongst them, returned to the swamps and carried on again, coming farther on to some more elephant spoor with the same result. It was now getting towards mid-day, although it was not hot, the water we were wading in keeping the lower part of the body cool, and the forest trees the sun off the head, so, being pretty hungry by this time, I had a go at my monkey-nuts and Joe at his banana.

We were still splashing in the water when we came on the spoor of a big bull, the tracker stopping now for our approbation while we examined it, to find it a twenty-inch foot, which was quite good, and one up to the tracker, who was still suffering from the effects of my asking him if he could not get out of the water by way of a change. He asked what was to be done, as it meant going farther into the swamp, and I told him of course we would follow it, even if it took us up to our necks. Everybody being now more satisfied, we therefore continued the tracking

of the animal, the water being presently up to our waists.

A little farther on we sighted the elephant standing on a small bit of an island just above the surrounding water. It was very awkward getting up to him, as when we got closer, owing to the reeds, etc., we could not see him; but after a bit we spotted a tuft of reeds growing on a mound about a yard square, on to which we clambered, balancing ourselves as best we could. At that moment the elephant became aware of our presence and wheeled sharply round, giving us the broadside ear-shot, and, with both firing together, the animal dropped dead.

On going up to him, we found his tusks very long, five feet out of his head, but on the other hand very thin—one of the thinnest tuskers I had ever come across, in fact, and not weighing much. After having cut off his tail, we began our return journey, I estimating that we had a small walk of about fifteen miles to go.

Now this country is full of rivers and other water, and old Joe knew the names of them all. The one we had to cross on our homeward journey was named the M'zungu—white man—but why this, the dirtiest and muddiest of the lot, should be named the M'zungu I never found out. When we arrived on its banks the sun had already gone down, but there was a village whose people gave us some monkey-nuts, which were very acceptable, as I was famished, and we were both done up. Our camp was about two miles on the other side, and we had to cross by means of a *kilalo*, which is the native name for a bridge, but in this case rather a misnomer, as it is a causeway with some



A SPLENDID SPECIMEN OF A NATIVE OF UGANDA.







poles put lengthways and some others thrown across, with generally a big gap in the centre, where the force of the stream has carried the frail structure away. It never gets repaired except on the occasion of a rare visit from an Administrator. These so-called bridges are no doubt an easy matter for a naked shenzi to negotiate, but quite another matter for a white man with boots and unaccustomed to the greasy-pole form of sport.

As it was now dark, the natives of the village made torches and lit them, and we prepared to cross the M'zungu. I got hold of a native, and put him in front of me, making him hold tight to the muzzle of my rifle while I held the other end, in which way we had managed to get half-way across, when old Joe slipped, and in he went under the mud and slime. Calling out to him to ask him where he was, by the aid of a torch we discovered Joe, who appeared something like Neptune. We hauled him up, but he said not a word, perhaps could not, his mouth being probably full of mud.

By this time the torches had all gone out, so our natives started shouting to others on the opposite side, some of these last arriving eventually with torches. When I could see on what I was standing, it seemed a miracle to me how I had not fallen in as Joe had done; but I had afterwards many tumbles into rivers, till I became rather expert in walking along a single pole.

From Joe my memory wanders to a man who liked whisky. I was coming along the road from Entebbe to Hoima when I ran into a man I knew who had come from the latter place. Sitting down for a

few minutes to pass on the news, etc., he said : " There is a white man coming along the road whom you will meet in an hour's time, but whatever you do, don't tell him that you have any whisky." Naturally I asked what was the matter with him, but as he would not explain, merely repeating his advice, " Oh, very well then," I said ; " I will tell him I am on the water wagon."

Shortly after we parted I struck a white man being carried in a *machilla*—a custom not in force in Uganda amongst white men unless they were sick, but the usual practice with Indians—and on his emerging from the *machilla* I saw a long lanky man, with a long red moustache, which would have taken up a plateful of soup. We introduced ourselves, he seemingly knowing me, and after a few minutes' conversation, remarking that it was very dry, the sun scorched up everything, and as his safari was behind, did I happen to have anything to drink ? When I replied that I had some lime juice and a cold sparklet bottle, his jaw fell noticeably ; but as he kept on repeating that he could do with some whisky, I told him that I myself was on the wagon, and didn't think there was any, but that I would go and look. Incidentally, I could not send the boy, as for a certainty he would have brought it. He then insisted on going with me, and of course spotted a bottle, so I had to appear surprised, and could not very well get out of uncorking it.

I now realized my error in having said that I was on the water wagon—*i.e.* teetotal for the time being. However, I tackled the lime juice while he carried on with the whisky, and in a very short while—I don't

think it could have been more than fifteen minutes—he had finished half of the bottle. I thought it was time to be going, and said so, but the red-moustached gent, with a taste for (other people's) Scotch, was not having any. "Oh, don't go," he said, with an injured expression. "My safari will be along in a few minutes and we will push off together." He then hauled out of the *machilla* some bread and anchovy paste, inviting me to join him, but when I excused myself he cut off a large slice of bread, and emptying the contents of the tin of anchovy paste, got away with it; after which, no doubt feeling greatly refreshed, he reached for the whisky again, and in two or three goes he had finished the bottle. Very coolly asking me then if I wanted the bottle—for which I had no further use, thank you—he cast it from him, saying, "Well, I must be going now. Very pleased to have met you."

My reflections as he clambered into his *machilla* and was whisked off may be imagined!

A more exciting experience, and one giving an idea of the queer manners and customs of the country, may be also worthy of record. On one of my journeys I came on some travellers from all parts of the world, this being their first experience of Africa, amongst the party being a Swiss, an Italian, and a man from the Bowery of New York. The latter sported a bowler hat with the rim broken, which was extraordinary, as a bowler hat *without* the rim being broken would be no ordinary sight in this part of the world.

They were being brought up country by a celebrated old Boer transport-rider named Pete Van der Westhuisen, who wore leather trousers, though not

exactly trousers, but knee breeches, and made by his wife. Very full behind and with a gentle slope to the knee, they probably originated the plus fours vogue.

Incidentally, it could not have been a very paying game for old Pete. I asked one of the party what pay he would get for punching these bullocks, and received the reply of "oompence"—*i.e.* nothing—"a month and—all scoff."

Now I forgot to mention that amongst this party was a celebrated Jew gambler, seeking pastures new, known all over the country for his dry humour and quick repartee, and going under the name of Ikey Sonnenburg. Well, then, it happened that during the night some lions raided old Westhuisen's wagons and carried off one of the bullocks. The whole camp was astir early next morning, intent on rounding up the marauders, everybody with a variety of lethal weapons. I particularly noticed the Swiss and the Bowery gentleman armed respectively with a silver-plated miniature revolver and a large knife. They came to the wagon where Ikey Sonnenburg was still in the blankets, and shouted, "Get up, Ikey, and let us go and look for the lions." But there was to be no assistance from that quarter. "Leave me alone," mumbled a sleepy voice from within; "I ain't lost no lions."

On Ikey's arrival at his destination he commenced to carry on his profession of a gambler. Now the hotel in which gambling took place was visited by some person or other who, when the pool became attractively large, conceived the idea of throwing a ginger-beer bottle at the lamp, and thus plunging the room in darkness. A rush and grab for the money on

the table would then ensue, the man with the biggest pile being, of course, the greatest attraction. This used to happen so often that those who had lost by the ginger-beer merchant got rather fed up. So a truce was called, and it was decided that when next the bottle was thrown nobody was to touch any money on the table, but just stand by and wait for the first man who attempted to grab it, and then all hit at him.

So far so good. It happened, however, that the proprietor of the hotel—also a Jew, and what a nose he had!—had become intrigued by the get-rich-quick possibilities of the ginger-beer bottle method, and had confided to his wife that when next the lamp was smashed, he would be all there for the loot.

Where he came unstuck was in not being at the meeting where the gamblers decided to stand by and hit the first man making a grab at the money. When the eventful night arrived, smash went the lamp, and all the gamblers stood up with clenched fists to let the robber have it hot and strong, one man making a rush for the table, whereupon they all hit at him, one of the gamblers observing subsequently that he was sure he had hit the offender in the face, and believed he had broken his nose.

The robber, in the meantime, had escaped under cover of the darkness, but on the following morning the proprietor being not in evidence, his wife was questioned as to his whereabouts. She replied, bursting with laughter, that he was upstairs with a bad go of fever, but of course it did not take long before everybody knew exactly what was the matter with him, especially when he reappeared after two weeks with his nose strapped and quite a different



shape to what it had been before his attack of "fever"!

Finally, in my collection of queer characters, one of the weirdest old sports I have run across was a man named Clarkson, a Dane, whom I met in the low country of the Transvaal. He was an extraordinary-looking man of the Rip Van Winkle style, with long hair and a long, shaggy beard. He was doing some mason work when I knew him, but had at one time been a transport-rider.

His last experience at the latter game was an unlucky one. He had left Mafeking for Salisbury with a wagon load of gin in cases, but arrived at his destination six months later with empty cases, and his wagon and bullocks were thereupon declared forfeit by the Court to pay for the gin that had leaked. Poor old Clarkson was murdered by the Matabeles during the rebellion.



## CHAPTER XVII

### CAMP-FIRE YARNS

WHERE elephant-hunters are gathered together, logs heaped on the fire and the whisky bottle is going round, things are ripe for the usual flow of yarns told on these convivial occasions. The following remembered by me are now given as related by the different story-tellers themselves.

“ When I was A.D.C. on the Portuguese Frontier,” began the Colonel, “ I had on one occasion been away on safari round my district, and on returning to my Post I found a native on the verandah sitting in my own particular chair—a clothed native, by the way, wearing a coat, trousers, boots, and a black hat. As it was an understood thing amongst all the servants that no native, whatever his class, was allowed to use the chair in question, you may imagine my surprise to see this man sitting there as comfortable as you please. Hoofing him out of it, I called my personal boy, and, asking him why he had allowed the liberty, was told that the man said he was the same as a European, and always sat on the white men’s chairs.

“ As a crowd of natives had gathered round to see what would happen, and prestige would suffer, I ordered him to be given ten cuts with the kiboko,

but, 'Oh no,' he said, 'that cannot be for me, as I am an evangelist from the Mission Station, and have come to teach the people.' I retorted that I would first teach *him*, by giving him what he had been promised; but as it occurred to me that a hiding to a Mission boy, and a so-called evangelist, might probably cause trouble, I kept him in the Station, giving him seven days' imprisonment.

"Two or three days afterwards some Portuguese officials paid me a visit, as was customary, I in turn occasionally visiting them. Having had my predicament put to them, they asked to see him, and on their questioning him, he said his name was Emanuel, and they proved him to be a Portuguese subject. The officials then said that as that was the case he must be handed over to them for trial, which I accordingly did, and they took him away.

"Some months later, when on a visit to these same Portuguese, I asked what had been done with the evangelist. 'Oh,' they said, 'we tried him and gave him imprisonment for life.' One of the officials then called him, upon which Emanuel came trotting up, all smiles, but minus coat, boots, and hat. The Portuguese said he was a very good boy and worked excellently."

The talk having turned on cannibalism, another man of the company said: "Some people say that cannibalism is non-existent in Africa, but I remember when the *Ville de Bruges* went down in the Congo River, that as fast as the passengers and crew got ashore the natives on the bank were waiting for them with pangas and axes, killing them and eating them

right away. The only survivor was the second captain, who managed to see what was going on, and stuck to his bit of floating wreckage. In spite of the crocodiles that infested the river, he floated down sixty miles to a wood Post, where he came ashore, and spread the news of the disaster.

“I also remember on the Oubanghi, at a place named Betou, they were troubled with continual desertions of the crew, so extra night-watchmen were put on, who caught two natives in the act of drowning a native sailor. Their *modus operandi* was to swim out to the ship and clap their hands over the mouth of a sleeping sailor, and before he had time to shout they had him under the water and drowned. They then towed him ashore and carried him off to the forest, which grew right up to the bank, in order to make a fire and eat him.

“No cannibals! Why, at the Post of Bangui, in the old days, natives would come from the interior and buy a woman for about fifty francs, and then take her away and eat her. They didn’t eat white men; there was such a fuss made about it that the game was not worth the candle. A native chief on the Gribingui told me that all white men were hypocrites in the matter. They themselves, he said, ate human flesh in their part of the world, but when they came amongst native cannibals they put on a lot of swank and pretended that they did not. He was not going to believe that anybody would forgo long pork if he had the chance to eat it, the truth being that white people did not like to be seen doing it! Then again, he argued, what did they want all the ivory for? Why, every one knew that it was to feed that enormous

beast they have which produces the cloth they come to trade with !”

Some laughter having followed the above revelation of native simplicity, “ Yes, there are funny things happen in that part of the world,” put in a hunter named Smith. “ When I was in the Congo Français at the head waters of the Gribingui and the Chari rivers, I was occupying an empty house in the straggling station—an ordinary soft brick house with a thatched roof, having a verandah all round. My loads were parked on the verandah, and the porters went off to sleep at the camp provided for them, my two boys sleeping on the verandah. After having had dinner, I turned in about nine o’clock, my boys doing ditto, but was awakened about an hour or so later by some one or something scratching at the door. I called out, ‘ Who’s there?’ but there was no reply, and the scratching ceased. I thought it must have been some animal or other, so I took no further notice, but after a while, with the scratching beginning again, I sang out once more, and, getting no reply, lit the lamp and opened the door. Not a soul about but my two boys fast asleep on the verandah, so I returned, very puzzled, and got into bed again, leaving the lamp alight.

“ I had not turned in for more than a few minutes when the scratching started again, and this time I was so annoyed that I jumped up and flung open the door, cursing volubly; but still nobody was there, and a quick tour of the verandah revealed only that the boys had not moved, and were still asleep. Thoroughly mystified now, I once more got into bed,

presently to hear the scratching yet again, but by this time having had enough of going out to see who it was, I called out, 'If you don't go away, I'll blow your head off with an 11.2.'

"That did it! for the next moment a voice said, 'Oh, Mr. Smith, don't you remember me and the things that I showed you on the Oubanghi,' and I recognized the voice as that of a Sierra Leone native who was credited with being a Juju man.

"'Oh yes,' I said, 'I remember you, but where are you? I have been outside three times and could not see any one,' to which he replied, 'Yes, but I am here notwithstanding. I will now show you something more,' so I got out of bed and sat on a chair, awaiting further events.

"It is necessary to explain here that the house had two rooms, one opening on to the other, the door, when left open, being close to the wall. Chancing, then, to glance at this door, I saw a native with his head stuck over the top of it, and while looking at him and wondering how he had got there, he put out his tongue in an impudent manner.

"That was too much for me, so I made a rush to get hold of him, upon which he disappeared, and although I threw back the door and looked behind it, there was no one there. A laugh followed, however, making me open the door quickly again, still to see nobody, so I banged the door to and flopped on the chair again, feeling thoroughly bewildered. I had no sooner sat down than up came the nigger's face over the door, and the same impudent gesture; but I did not worry to go over and investigate this time, and after a little the face disappeared.



“The next incident was no less extraordinary. I was instructed by the voice to look on the floor, and on looking down I saw a large snake coming in a direct line to the chair in which I was sitting. By this time I was quite convinced that the snake was an optical illusion, but as it came on towards my chair, eventually to pass underneath it, I could not for the life of me prevent myself from lifting my legs up to let it go through. And there were several other manifestations of a similar nature that I saw that night.

“On thinking it over in the morning, I came to the conclusion that there must be some one about who was responsible for what had happened, and I was rather intrigued to get to the bottom of it. That day I had lunch with the Commissaire de District and the Administrateur, the two French officials of the Post, and I related to them the events of the previous night, their opinion being the same as mine that somebody was having a game with me. They then came along to the house, thoroughly searching the roof and every conceivable place for concealed wires, but found nothing whatever, so that night we arranged for askaris to be posted in commanding positions surrounding the house, and for two white officials to occupy an empty house, not more than twenty yards away. I myself was to go to bed at my usual hour, and should the scratching commence, I was to shout in a loud voice, ‘Who’s there?’ The officials were then to rush to the place, the askaris the while opening fire on any one attempting to break through the cordon.

“Everything having been arranged, I went to



bed as usual, and after about fifteen minutes the scratching at the bottom of the door commenced, my shout being followed by the rush of the two white officials, revolver in hand, and themselves shouting to the askaris to look out. Nobody, however, was seen, and nobody tried to break through the cordon of askaris, a search of the roof and everywhere producing also no results.

"I remained at the house about a week after this, and while there it was a usual thing for uncanny happenings to occur, but I took no further notice of them, and when I wanted to sleep, would say, 'Go away, I want to sleep,' at which they would at once cease. I ought to add, finally, that they did not occur after I left, nor previously when the house was occupied by the Medical Officer of the Post."

"A very interesting yarn," commented Bolton, an explorer, approvingly, "and it reminds me of a queer experience I myself once had on a cargo boat when on my way down the Congo River to Brazzaville. The boat was captained by a Dutchman, and I might mention that at that time all Congo steamers plying up and down the river carried two captains, being named respectively first and second captains; and on my asking why, I received the reply that one or the other of them generally got lost.

"Well, I managed to fix up a passage with the first captain, saying that as I had my camp bedstead I could sleep on the deck; but he informed me that I should have to get up at four in the morning, as he wanted to start the ship at that hour, and with my bedstead in the gangway he would not be able to

pass to and fro. As I wanted to get down the river as soon as possible, I fell in with his idea, arranging also to have my meals with the two captains on the front of the ship near the wheel. It is their custom to feed thus, so that either captain can be always on the bridge whilst the boat is moving.

“I got up regularly at 4 a.m., so that the captain could get on with the working of his ship; but after the second day he suggested that as it must be very uncomfortable getting up in the dark, I might not object to having my bedstead moved down on the lower deck, as there was an empty space I could use, and I should not be disturbed by him moving from one part of the upper deck to the other. I agreed, so the next night I had my camp bed parked down below. After dinner that evening, with the usual *vin ordinaire* and afterwards a bottle of eau-de-vie, I turned in and fell asleep, some time later to be awakened by something or other. Opening my eyes, a little farther on I could see the night-watchman by the glimmer of light from a lantern suspended from the roof—these boats are double-deckers—and was just about to turn over and go to sleep again, when I thought I saw a wild animal looking at me from the gloom of the ship. It was, I thought, a *fisi* (hyæna), and I was surprised to see such an animal aboard the ship, but as we had anchored—as is the custom with these boats at night—I thought it had probably walked on by means of a plank.

“I reached for one of my boots and threw it at it, the boot going banging down the deck; but as the *fisi* did not budge, I got up, with the intention of shifting it, shouting to the night-watchman to kick

it off the ship. On my getting up it disappeared, and the night-watchman said he had seen nothing, but would keep a look out; so off I went to sleep again, but only to be awakened as before, and this time there was not one *fisi*, but quite a crowd, all sitting up on their haunches watching me.

“ Well, I pinched myself pretty hard to see if I was awake, and the nip I gave myself settled all doubts on that point, so I had another look at them and closed my eyes and began to think; and the more I thought about it, the more it seemed that I must be having an attack of D.T.’s. I began to add up what I had been drinking, not having had delirium tremens myself before, but having seen other people with it. The symptoms were certainly identical, but after some consideration of the amount of alcoholic liquor I had consumed during the week I came to the conclusion that, whatever it was, it was not the quantity that was producing these effects. So I said to myself, ‘ Well, old sport, if you *have* got ’em, the next thing is to get rid of ’em,’ to which end I resolved to make up my mind that the *fisis* were not real, and not to worry about them, and the hallucination would pass.

“ But it didn’t pass. They were still sitting in a row nice and quiet, till I fell off to sleep again. I felt all right in the morning and quite normal, so I thought it best not to say anything to the two captains about it, but I settled that alcohol, at least, was not going to be responsible, so that night I only touched a little wine and water with my dinner, refusing any other drinks with the excuse of a headache.

“Before turning in I had a good look round, as well as interviewing the night-watchman, telling him to see that no wild animals came up the ship’s plank during the night, which he promised to do; but I could not have been asleep long before being again mysteriously awakened to see my *fisis* sitting on their haunches quietly watching me. There were more of them than on the previous night, and they disappeared as usual when I called the watchman. I had dozed off again when I felt the bed being lifted up and down, which of course made me sit up and take notice; but the only things in evidence were my *fisis* back in their old position, watching me and seemingly very interested. I searched under the cot, but as one knows, there is no room for any one to hide under an ordinary ‘x compactum’ bedstead.

“Very puzzled, I again called the night-watchman, telling him what would happen to any one who came near my bed, and he agreeing that the sort of thing I would do with any nigger caught coming round would do him good. It was not quite so bad as boiling him in oil, but something near it. I might add that on the arrival of the night-watchman the *fisis* invariably dissolved. However, I pushed the bedstead flush against one of the bulkheads of the ship, so that nothing could get round each side of me; but as it was impossible to sleep it occurred to me to try to touch the *fisis*. My hand went quite through the nearest one without encountering anything, so I went back to bed, but had no sooner dropped off than it began to tilt again and I nearly fell out.

“I now felt sure that some Ju-ju business was being carried on, though in the morning the events of





(Upper) A SCENE IN THE JUNGLE.

(Lower) A GROUP OF NATIVES ON A VISIT TO THE BELGIAN CONGO.





the night seemed preposterous, and nothing more than a nightmare, so I still kept mum about it.

“At eleven o’clock in the morning, however, while the ship was under way, I happened to be standing near the mouth of the ladder-way which connects the two decks, when I heard some natives on the lower deck talking about some one. I pricked up my ears, and gathered that they were talking about me. One of them said : ‘What an extraordinary white man ! Why does he not jump overboard as some of the others have done ? He sees these things and takes no notice of them, just as if they were not there.’

“Well that made a certainty of it for me, and I was now so tired after being deprived of two nights’ sleep, that I went down to my camp bed and put in a good sleep to make up for it. That night I intended to try and find out who was the Ju-ju man, and how he did it, so after dinner I turned in as usual, but before retiring tried the bedstead, and put a little oil in places where it squeaked when the occupant moved. I was awakened shortly after going to sleep in the usual manner, to find the bedstead moving, and my *fisi* family in force ; but taking no notice of them, with all my faculties alert, I cast my eyes in the direction where the night-watchman was standing under the glimmer of light from the lantern. As I myself was in the dark, I don’t think he could see me, although I could see him. I then carefully slipped off the bed on to the deck, and lay flat on my face for a while to see what would happen, but with nothing taking place, I crept face downwards round the deck.

“Now this boat was towing two other boats,

also laden with cargo, one on each side. On moving to the edge I started to feel along the projecting eave of the other boat, and on groping with my hands I came in contact with some one—everything was dark, by the way, on this part of the ship; in fact, these extra cargo boats had no lights at all. I immediately grabbed him with all my strength, and a real struggle took place between us until I eventually succeeded in getting him by the throat, and he commenced to gurgle, upon which I loosened on him with the promise that if he started any nonsense I would drown him in the river. He at once promised to be reasonable, so I told him to get up; but on my eyes piercing the gloom I found he was unable to do so, being completely immersed in a suit of canvas, which came right over his head. It was of grey canvas with black markings on the upper portion—two spots, one for each eye, and a dash for the mouth; the whole making him look like an Egyptian mummy.

“Helping him out of this encumbrance, I informed him that I felt murderous from lack of sleep, and now he must tell me all about it, and how it was done, or I would kill him. I may add here that one side of the Congo River was Belgian and the other side French, the river three metres from either bank being neutral, and that no one could be brought to book for anything taking place at that distance from the shore—a fact well known to all the natives going up and down the river, the islands being also neutral territory.

“He said it was a fair bargain, so the first question I put to him was with reference to the peculiar suit of

clothes that he had just got out of, which he explained was what they called *Bhang*, a devil god. I then said, 'You have been doing these manifestations against my will, now carry on with my consent,' upon which he told me to look at the wood-pile carried aboard to keep the engines going and stacked in a portion of the ship set apart for that purpose. I looked at the pile, and sure enough a picture appeared, after a few seconds to fade away, others taking its place in succession. They were principally of the Almanac variety, but some were not. I was so interested in all these things that I was being shown that I didn't go to bed, and when 4 a.m. arrived and the engines were getting up steam, he then told me to look at the steam which was now mounting upwards from the boilers, and on looking I saw figures of people, natives, etc., dancing in the steam. 'Well,' I said, 'I'm satisfied now, but in the future let me sleep at night,' to which he replied, 'Oh, that will be all right now, and you won't be troubled again.' 'Good!' I went on; 'but one more question: why did you do it?' His answer was a staggerer. 'Well,' he said, 'generally the person that we do it on jumps overboard and gets drowned, and then every one is tickled to death!'

"To end my yarn, it had now become daylight, and the personal boys were bringing up the early morning cup of coffee, my own boy having just entered with my cup as the old chap was telling me to look into the trees. We were passing the wooded country in the basin of the Congo, where it is thick forest each side of the river. I looked, to see two enormous elephants emerging from the mass of tall

trees, and a lion charging across the water towards the ship. 'Quick!' I said to my boy, who stood waiting with the coffee in his hand, as I pointed to the lion; 'tell me what you see.' But he himself saw nothing but the forest and the water."

As it was about my own turn for a yarn, I said: "Yes, that was an extraordinary experience, and goes to prove the truth of the quotation, 'There are more things in heaven and earth,' etc. Now here is a curious thing that happened to me. I went out one day after elephant in the big Congo Forest, and the swamps were so bad that I was continually wading in water, and the elephants were very jumpy, the natives in this part having an enormous lot of pop-guns, and the game was off at the slightest sound.

"I had been following a wary old bull all day without being able to get a sight of him. On the qui vive all the time, he would either be forewarned of my approach by getting the scent, or by the accidental breaking of a twig. However, I determined to follow him till sundown, if I did not come up with him before. It had now got on towards the afternoon, and at this time I was travelling through some mossy country, so soft underfoot that I was making absolutely no noise, especially as I was on that day wearing rubber shoes.

"Well, on looking ahead down the track that the elephant had taken, I saw a dark object coming towards me, which in the distance and the gloom of the forest I took for a baby elephant, so I stopped dead and allowed the animal to come on, which it did,

not looking up till it was not more than two yards in front of me. It then stood up on its hind legs and looked at me, its face, to my no small astonishment, being exactly like a native's; and on its standing up I saw that it was about five foot six in height. It stared at me for a few seconds, and then, with an exclamation resembling 'Waa,' and without any sign of fear, turned round and loped off.

"I turned to the gunbearer and the tracker, who were both following me at the time, asking them what they thought of it, to which they replied, *Kama muntu, bwana*, agreeing that it was more like a human being than an animal. I have seen chimpanzees and gorillas, but this was nothing like either of them, my opinion being that it was some sort of missing link.

"On getting back to camp I related my experience to another white hunter who happened to be there, but was sick at the time. In his idea I ought to have shot it, as it would have been a wonderful thing for scientists to have seen, but I said: 'My dear fellow, in my opinion the thing was human, and I would have felt like a murderer.'

"I can quite believe that it was some kind of a missing link, as I remember the case of a supposed native having died at a Congo village, and a Belgian official who happened to be on the spot was unable to decide whether the deceased was an ape or *homo sapiens*, some of the natives claiming him as a member of the tribe, and others declaring him to be an ape. The official decided that the safest course to follow was to declare that he was a native, and he was therefore buried as such. At a subsequent inquiry into the affair, many natives affirmed that at one time some

terrible warlike apes used to descend on them from the forest, kill any natives they could catch, and then carry them off to the forest and eat them. The man just buried was, they considered, a hybrid descendant of these apes."



## CHAPTER XVIII

### NATIVE SERVANTS

WHILST camping at Entebbe in the year 1904, in preparation for my first hunt in the Belgian Congo, I picked up among other servants a small boy, who came and squatted down at the kitchen, and said that he wanted a job as a *toto jikoni*—kitchen help. He was not expensively clothed, as he only had about a half a yard of dirty *Americani*—calico—about his loins. So anxious was he to come on safari, begging me to take him, that I told the cook that he had better have him. Before leaving for safari he subbed five rupees to get some clothes, which I advanced him. He then appeared resplendent in a new fez, singlet, and a clean cloth round him, looking quite smart. His name, he said, was Juma, and he was of the Unyoro tribe, and a follower of Islam. He also informed me that he had taken part in the Uganda Mutiny, but on questioning him closely it turned out that he was on the rebel side. On the road he used to regale the other servants with his adventures amongst the mutineers.

A very willing youngster and very loyal, he used to tell me that he was my dog, so when there was anything in the food line that was not wanted, I would tell him to throw it to the dog, whereupon he would make the noise of a dog barking before eating it himself.

Owing to getting plenty of food, he grew rapidly, and on an occasion offering I promoted him to the position of tent boy, the duties of which post he carried out quite well. While he was with me the natives of the districts we entered used to bring up unlimited food for every one, without my even ordering them to do so. This was due to Juma, who used to put the wind up them directly the safari arrived in camp. If any chief or headman came up to see me, Juma would immediately order him off if he had not an adequate present of food. Seeing natives approaching, he would intercept them, and ask them what they wanted, and on their replying that they wanted to see the white man, Juma would simulate the greatest horror. "What!" he would cry. "You come to see my *Bwana*, the biggest man in the country, and only bringing one miserable fowl! Be off with you and bring something suitable to the dignity of a white man." They would immediately turn round and march off, being thankful that they had escaped so lightly, and return later with other villagers and no end of food and honey, the latter delicacy Juma being particularly fond of. I remember, at one camp, that no less than six jars of honey were brought in.

Juma would announce these men in the usual manner, saying that the Sultani had come to see me, and had brought a little food as a present. Of course presents were given in return, and the honey, etc., found its way to the kitchen. Goats and sheep were brought in every day, and the safari had a royal time. We were then in the Atcholi country, a country that Juma knew well, as it was there that the Uganda mutineers made their last stand, when Colonel Delmé

Ratcliff rounded them up. Juma induced an old chief, who was of a jolly disposition, to show me where he himself had withstood the regular troops. All on one side of the mountain were tiers of stone *krantzies*—stone walls—used for barricades. His own house was on a hill, which had been struck by cannon fire, putting two nasty holes through it. The old man laughed inordinately whilst pointing out these gaps in his house. The natives used to crowd round Juma, who used to spin them extraordinary yarns ; in fact, Juma was an accomplished liar.

At Fajao the ferry at the foot of the Murchison Falls is infested with crocodiles, which have an easy time catching fish which come over the falls in a stunned condition. As from our position we could see thousands of them, I told Juma to bring up the ferrymen, and I would arrange to have a day's crocodile-shooting. The ferrymen came up, and having bargained to shoot a hippo for them if they took me in their large canoe amongst the crocodiles, we set off the next day, the party including, of course, the irrepressible Juma.

They piloted me amongst the islands of the Victoria Nile, allowing the canoe to drift, while every one took cover by crouching down in the boat. We drifted right amongst the crocs, who were ashore in thousands, lying side by side, and I opened fire, at which the whole of the islands seemed to be in motion, all the crocs making for the water. At the close of the day I had two crocodiles stone dead, the others having managed, some of them practically at their last gasp, to reach the water.

There is supposed to be a gland in the crocodile

from which the musk scent of commerce is manufactured, so we had one of the crocodiles skinned and disjointed, to endeavour to discover the musk, but without success. During the skinning process a nerve of the reptile was cut, which had the effect of swinging his tail with great force, the skinner being knocked down. The man, thinking that the croc had come back to life, jumped up and ran as hard as he could go, pulling up about a hundred yards away, every one else, of course, being in roars of laughter. The man then came back, and they were all laughing and joking about it, when the same thing happened again, only this time the man did not run quite so far. The search for the illusive gland being unsuccessful, I decided to take a portion of the skin and have a gun-case made from it. I then had the skin carefully dried and cured in the sun and packed on the safari.

Two or three nights afterwards I happened to be camping at the Masindi Boma. The same night as we arrived, I was lying on my bed listening to Juma telling yarns. He had quite an audience, there being about a dozen shenzis—uncivilized natives—hearing with open mouths of the extraordinary things that had happened on safari. One of them, pointing to the crocodile skin, asked what it was for, upon which Juma, not to be done, replied, “Oh, that crocodile skin; why, don’t you know what that is? Why, that is very powerful *dawa*—medicine. When my *Bwana* goes shooting elephants, I carry this skin for him, and the effect on the elephants is to send them stone blind while the skin is there. Then my *Bwana* walks up to the elephants, who, of course, cannot see him, and feels their tusks. If they are big ones like

these—pointing to some tusks I had shot—and have no defects, he shoots them. So you see that skin is very powerful *dawa*.”

In the morning the crocodile skin was gone, and so were all the shenzis. I wondered afterwards what happened when they carried out the formula of Juma's teaching.

## CHAPTER XIX

### AN INTERESTING CANOE TRIP

**A**MONG my elephant-shooting experiences, I must not omit a short account of my most profitable day. A small boy arrived at my camp early one morning, and with hands and arm motions intimated that he knew the whereabouts of some big elephants. He could not speak one word of any language that either the safari or myself could understand, but as he was only about ten years of age, and did not seem to have any vice in him, I said to Sururu, my gunbearer, that we had better follow him.

After going for about two hours over the hills and through mountainous country, I called a halt, so that I could question him as to the whereabouts of the elephants, but not being able to understand each other, it did not have any appreciable result. His method of getting me to follow him was to turn and face me, backing away then and pointing with both hands and fingers towards his chest, after which he would turn round and go on. I began to suspect that perhaps he was taking me to show me some buffalo or antelope with big horns ; but, in any case, I decided to see it through, so, after going for about another hour, we went through a narrow pass and came on to a small



escarpment, at the edge of which he pointed to the valley below.

Down in the valley there was a small stream of water, with eight bull elephants standing beside it, one a tremendous beast whose tusks, after being weighed, scaled over one hundred and twenty pounds each. Wasting no time, after a quick survey of the country, I came to the conclusion that for them to get out they would have to come my way, the opposite direction being fringed with high precipitous hills. I now singled out the big one, taking my .577 for the purpose, and as he presented the head broadside on, I took it and he dropped dead. I then got on to the others, and as fast as the gunbearers could load I was firing, elephants now going down one after the other. One great big elephant, with hundred-pound tusks, mounted the other bank, and was scaling a steep hill, up which it had managed to get a distance of five hundred yards, when I opened fire on him with my .256 Mannlicher, which caused him to turn round and face me. A lucky shot then got him, and he threw his trunk in the air and came crashing down the hill, carrying rocks and boulders with him, eventually fetching up against a ledge of rock.

There were now two left, which came charging at the gap where I was standing, and these I banged as they passed, one of them going down and the other getting through, but pulling up about a hundred yards away, to stand while I went up to him and gave him the *coup de grâce*.

Sururu remarked that it was *kama vita*—like a war. I had fired eighty rounds of ammunition inside a few minutes. The tusks, when they were weighed, totalled

seven hundred and seventy-six pounds, which I sold off-hand to an Indian trader for £500. There was, I am pleased to say, not a scrap of the meat wasted, even the hide being carried off for consumption. In fact, the only evidence that remained were the skulls, of which every vestige of meat had been scraped off!

During one of my hunting trips I had occasion to take a canoe up the Haut M'Bomou, the river that divides the territories of the French and Belgian Congos on the north. I was at Bangassou, the French Post of that name, and wished to reach the Post of Zemio, some six hundred kilometres farther up the river. No porters being procurable, all the available natives having been commandeered for a railway under construction at Point Noire on the west coast, I interviewed a Portuguese trader who owned one or two of these canoes, with which he transported his trade goods up and down the river. He said that as his canoes were idle at the time, I could have one by paying the crew a month's wages.

There were eight paddlers and a Capita. The paddlers were to receive twenty-five francs per head, and the Capita in charge, thirty francs, to be paid in advance—the general custom in the French Congo. I did not see where the Portuguese would get any profit from the transaction, but he explained that when I had discharged the crew I had only to give them a chit to the effect that they had completed their contract to my satisfaction, after which the canoe could call at his several trading Posts along the river and bring down any produce awaiting transport. Again, the reason why the men are paid in advance is ostens-

ibly so that they can buy trade goods to barter with the natives for food and other necessities, but really they double their wages in this manner. I watched them buying from the Portuguese goods which ranged from hats to brass wire, beads and salt, the latter being very scarce, and coming principally from the Portuguese possession of Angola.

This is where the Portuguese came in again, as I noticed that they spent practically every franc that they got from me in buying these trade goods, and when they again parted with them they would not part with anything under one hundred per cent. profit.

The Capita now had an interview with the Portuguese regarding some money that had to be thrown into the river, and on my trying to get an explanation of what seemed to me to be an easy but extraordinary method of getting rid of money, he was disinclined to tell me, and passed it off that it was quite a private matter between him and the Capita, so I was perforce to leave it at that. The mysterious action will, in due course, be explained.

The next day, all being ready, and the natives having fixed me up an awning as some sort of protection from the sun, which comes down with all its strength on the open sheet of water, we pushed off on our journey up the M'Bomou, the rains being already on, and the river moderately full. On leaving Bangassou I had possessed myself of two French-speaking boys, which was quite necessary, as although I was well acquainted with the two lingua francas of the Belgian Congo—namely, Ki-swahili and Bangala—these two languages are practically obsolescent in the

French Congo. We arrived at our camp on the first day at a little village on the Belgian side, where one of my boys, very keen to get some fresh meat, discovered that guinea-fowl came into the shambas in the evening. In great excitement he informed me he had heard from the shenzis that large quantities of big pigeons were waiting to be shot—every bird to this boy being a pigeon—and would I let him have the shot-gun with a view to dinner.

I told him he would probably fire the cartridges away without hitting anything, but as he averred that he was quite a good shot and had procured pigeons for his former master, I let him have three cartridges to see what he could do. About half an hour afterwards I heard two shots fired, and presently, to my agreeable surprise, he appeared with six shenzis in tow and one guinea-fowl. He had wounded another, he said, but the shenzis were so stupid that they could not find it, but had promised that they would get up early next day and look for it. Of course I never gave the matter a second thought, but on our preparing to push off at the waterside in the morning, I found between twenty and thirty shenzis shouting and gesticulating, and on inquiring into the cause of the uproar, it appeared that the whole trouble was about the guinea-fowl that had been lost the night before. As the shenzis had not produced the lost bird, they were accused of stealing it, and the boys, to recompense themselves, had appropriated half a canoeful of bananas, sweet potatoes, and other produce. As soon as I had mastered the facts of the case, I promptly had the whole lot put on shore and handed over to the shenzis, much to the dissatisfaction of the boys and

crew in general, and everything now being in order, we pushed off again up the river.

The river in the early morning was seething with bird life. There were eagles, fish-hawks, and all sorts of water birds, including the ubiquitous kingfisher, in a variety of sizes, shapes, and colours, and busily engaged in catching fish. Occasionally, too, one would catch sight of a family of small monkeys peering through the branches of the trees overlapping the water, but scampering off immediately into the forest as the canoe approached, these little animals being greatly prized by natives as food and relentlessly hunted by them. Hippos, again, disturbed in their morning snooze, poked their heads out of the water, emitting a series of grunts, and diving, to reappear a long distance off near the opposite bank; these also, close to the town of Bangassou as they were, and their meat fetching five francs the kilo in the market, having been severely hunted. The paddlers did their best to get near them, but found them too wary, so we were forced to leave them and continue our journey.

A little farther up the river we came on a native village, where we made a halt of a few minutes while the crew went ashore to buy food—a necessary purchase owing to the failure of the looting arrangements where we had slept overnight. After a while the chief came down, bringing a small chicken and some eggs, which I purchased from him, and I prevailed on him to bring me also a little rice. They were very short of everything, he said, owing to the only Congo steamer serving this portion of the French Congo having foundered about a month



previously, all this enormous territory in consequence being practically in a state of starvation, and every one was living *à la* native. Flour and even rice was unprocurable, some of the stores still having some tin foods, principally pâtes, etc., but nothing could be done with them without bread.

The crew having returned with bananas—not the ripe variety, but green, and decidedly unpalatable if one is unused to them—one of the boys having managed to get me some ground nuts, we pushed off once more. The sun had reached the meridian, putting out its full strength on the open expanse of water, and although I had an awning over my head, anywhere else that the sun could get at it burnt to a brick red. All animal and bird life had now deserted the open river and retired to the backwaters and the shade of the forest, and everything was silent, with the exception of the monotonous chant of the boatmen. The paddlers put their weight into it, as they were anxious to reach a certain spot where was a chief supposed to have plenty of food—a sure incentive for a native to get a move on—and about three o'clock in the afternoon we pulled in at a village on the French side of the river and disembarked.

On going ashore, I saw that a rest-house for the use of European travellers had been erected, so, having examined the place and found it fairly satisfactory, I told the headman of the village to have a plentiful supply of water brought up, so that I could flood the floor, this being my panacea to eliminate the obnoxious jigger flea. To persons fortunately unacquainted with this nasty insect, a short résumé of its habits will no doubt prove interesting. In the first place, it



is supposed to have been imported from South America by a native crew carrying it in their toes, and digging it out on landing on the west coast of Africa. The fleas, not being dead, cast around to find further victims in the natives of the country, and at the present time they are ubiquitous from the west to the east coast of Africa. The jigger favours a light, dry, sandy soil, wet and damp having the effect of killing him off, and is particularly obnoxious in that one cannot see him with the naked eye nor feel him whilst he is burrowing under the toe-nails, that being his favourite spot to attack his victim. The first intimation one has that he has succeeded in getting there is an intense itching, but, unfortunately again, unless one has very good eyesight one still cannot see the spot where he has made an entry. The best course to pursue is to call the personal boy and hand over the affected foot to him, he with his large experience and keen eyes being soon able to locate the offender, in a tiny black spot disclosing its whereabouts. Any attempt to take it out by oneself generally results in disaster, as I have particular reason to remember. Having once during the night felt an intolerable itching in one of my toes, I got up and, suspecting a jigger, tried, with the aid of a lamp and a needle, to remove the offending insect; but all I succeeded in accomplishing was lacerating the toe and leaving a portion of the jigger inside, which eventually resulted in blood-poisoning. The native does not extract the jigger in the early stages of its entry, the reason being, I presume, that he does not feel the itching in the same degree as a white person, and also cannot see the black spot on his black foot. Waiting, therefore, until the

jigger has laid its eggs, he is then able to locate the spot quite easily, and the jigger, with its nest of eggs, is extracted with the aid of a sharpened nail or the white camel thorn, and is promptly thrown away, where it takes up its life job of seeking fresh victims. The usual size of the insect and its ball of eggs at the time of the extraction by the native is about the size and colour of a white pea.

Later on, towards the evening, the chief turned up with a chicken and some eggs for me, and rations for the men. They were brought by the women, each woman bringing sufficient for one man, the price being usually fixed at a *macouter*—ten centimes—per man. I inquired if game was to be had in the vicinity of his village, especially elephants, and was told that although there was nothing but guinea-fowl about his place, there were many elephants on the other side of the river. After arranging with him to let me know in the morning if elephants were still about, I took my boy and went for a stroll around the shambas for guinea-fowl, and succeeded in bagging a couple.

Next day the report came that although elephants had not been seen, there were a lot of buffaloes, and the headman had sent three men to search for fresh spoor of elephants, and would send news on the day following. As this seemed going a long way about it, I decided that it would be better to shift camp to the other side of the river, especially as all the villages were short of food. The native who had been making inquiries suggested that he should go across again to say I was coming, when they would have a house ready for me and food for the men, so the next morning found us camped on the other bank, but

about two or three miles inland in order to be near the game.

That night I was kept awake by swarms of rats, and on looking at my shoes in the morning I found that the rats had made a meal off one of them. As there seemed a great element of doubt respecting the presence of elephants in the district, and as they did not pass in the vicinity of the village where I was encamped, I thought it better to send the Capita with the boy and the native, to report the presence of any fresh spoor. They accordingly departed on their quest, returning in the afternoon in a very excited frame of mind. For some time all I managed to get out of my French-speaking boy was, "Oh, monsieur, pardon, pardon; monsieur, pardon," with considerable emphasis on the *don*. Eventually I gathered that they had not seen any elephants, but may have come on fresh spoor. On this chance I told them to be ready at daylight to guide me to the spot, asking them also for particulars of the country on the way there, whether there were any swamps, etc., and they said there were none and the going very good.

The next morning at dawn I was up and ready, but, seeing no sign of the Capita, sent for him, saying that I was ready and he should have been as well. The guide, too, we found asleep in his hut, and by the time we had him out and he had completed his toilet, which principally consisted in tying ropes round his middle, it was seven o'clock before we were finally ready to start. However, we did start, and after going about three miles struck a nasty-looking swamp, at least a mile across. "Hullo, what is this?" I demanded of the boy. "The guide is evidently taking

us the wrong way, as you told me yesterday that there were no swamps on our way at all, one result being that I have not brought my canvas shoes." "Oh," he replied, "I forgot to tell you that yesterday we went nearly the whole distance by canoe, which we only left when the shenzi told us to get out where he said the elephants were staying." However, the swamp had to be negotiated, and with the guide assuring me that there was no other way but to go through it, on we went.

Incidentally here, and not inappropriately as regards the swamp, I may mention that all the natives in the French Congo buy shoes as soon as they take to wearing apparel, no town native being seen without them. The shoes are made by the Arabs, who drift down from the northern territories of Wadai and Lake Chad, and who themselves wear shoes. They are a very passable and strong article for dry weather, but should they get wet they curl up and get hard like wood, and naturally very uncomfortable to wear. The Capita and the boy, then, were wearing these shoes, but on coming to the swamp they took them off, and replaced them again on dry land. When, however, we were nearer to where the elephants were supposed to be, and I suggested that they should remove them, the clatter of the shoes being likely to scare off any game in the vicinity, they informed me that they had been wearing shoes all their lives, and could not walk without them. I told them that had I known it before I would not have allowed them to come, and that as soon as I struck some fresh spoor of elephant, they would have to march a hundred yards in the rear.

Shortly after this, striking some spoor several days old, the boy and the Capita became greatly excited, and asked me if they had not spoken the truth. "Yes," I said, "that's all right; but now take me to the fresh spoor that you saw yesterday. This is several days old, and the elephants, for all I know, by now a hundred miles away."

I could see that they were very disconcerted at this, and they spoke to the guide in his own tongue, which, of course, I could not understand. It confirmed me in my suspicion that the spoor we were on was the one that they had seen the day before, and they had taken it for fresh tracks.

We shortly afterwards came on a place in the thick forest where the elephants had been having a mud bath. This, they told me, was the spot at which they had stopped, and as the mud was still in a liquid state, they thought that the elephants had only just left; but I pointed out that the mud would remain in a liquid state for several more days, the sun being unable to penetrate through the thick foliage to dry it up. We searched around for an hour or more without coming on any fresh spoor, and as it was getting late I had to give up, and make our way back to camp, where we arrived just before sundown.

As there did not seem any likelihood of getting game in this district, the next day I pushed off on my journey up the river. In the morning we came on more hippos, but they were very shy, which I suspected was in consequence of being severely hunted, which turned out to be the case, as the natives were amply supplied with rifles, unused just then, the game having been practically shot out. I saw in the house

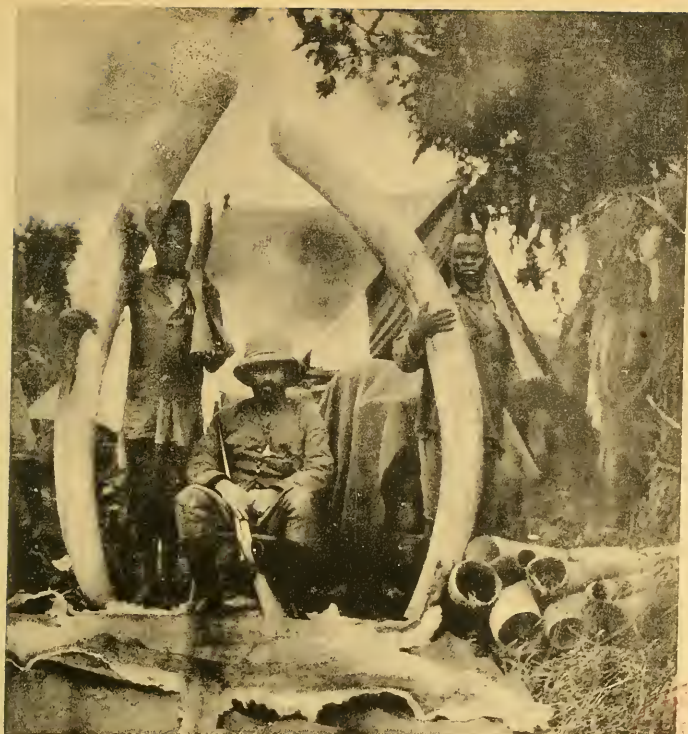


of one chief no less than thirty rifles stacked in a corner, and judging by the dust and dirt on them, they had evidently not been disturbed for months. The chief informed me that a few years before there were many elephants and other game in his district, but now everything had disappeared. He agreed that excessive shooting had probably driven away game to districts remote from human habitation, but said that even if they now got no ivory or meat, at least they did not have the elephants destroying the shambas. On my asking him which condition he would prefer, he said he would rather have them as they used to be, as nowadays one starved for the want of meat.

We left there the next morning, and on the way I knocked over a crocodile perched on the low bough of a tree overhanging the river, but of course I did not get him, as he was quickly taken down by the current. We pulled up that day at a largely populated native village on the Belgian side of the river. Here the natives did not possess guns, nor did I see a native with one while I was there. In this place there was game, and I shot a buffalo not more than half an hour from the village, much to the delight of every one concerned. The natives here called the animal "Anzari." It was of a reddish colour, very similar in appearance to the domestic cow, and is called by the natives on the west coast, the bush cow. The meat was excellent eating and quite tender.

There was also a large quantity of guinea-fowl, of which I got several, but of course I was being pestered to shoot more "Anzari." I got out of it by telling them that if they would pay for the cartridges





(Upper) THE AUTHOR SEATED BETWEEN HIS RECORD ELEPHANT'S  
TUSKS WEIGHING 145 lbs. EACH.

(Lower) NATIVE WOMEN CURIOUS TO SEE A WHITE MAN.



I would shoot them another, but as the price of cartridges was ten francs each up there, nobody was disposed to take it on.

In the meantime, money in the shape of Belgian francs suddenly made its appearance, and in quiet nooks round about the village I was constantly coming on small knots of gamblers, composed of one or two of the crew and several of the native villagers. My second boy appeared at lunch-time arrayed in a brand-new pair of trousers, shirt, and shoes, and on my asking him whence came all this finery, he replied that he had won it at a little game of "poker," or what was the native equivalent of that game. The head boy had not turned up, and he I found later with the Capita, in a nice secluded place under the shelter of a tree, a large blanket stretched out in front of them, a pack of greasy cards, and fifty or sixty francs. They were running a sort of Faro bank, with thirty or forty excited shenzi punters round them, trying to spot the winning card. After watching the game for a short while I came to the conclusion that the shenzis were profound optimists, not one of them having won a bean; and I would have cheerfully wagered a hundred to one against any one of them spotting the right card at the right time. My estimation of the intelligence of the Capita and the boy went up one hundred per cent.; they were evidently followers in a direct line to those artists of legerdemain, Messrs. Maskelyne and Cooke.

The next day we proceeded on our journey up the river, and on the way I was struck with the ease that ivory could be smuggled from the Belgian Congo to the French Congo. Belgian Congo ivory has a tax

imposed by the Government amounting in the case of large tusks to as much as seventy francs the kilo. This tax must be paid on all ivory, however it may have been obtained. For instance, a white hunter pays five thousand francs for the right to shoot two male elephants, and should he be fortunate in killing an elephant with tusks scaling thirty-five kilos each, he has to pay the maximum rate of seventy francs the kilo, in addition to the five thousand francs already paid for a licence; a graduated lower rate being charged if the tusks are smaller or of less weight. This, of course, puts the matter of profit entirely out of the question, as the cost of the expedition—which includes also an export tax of two and a half per cent.—would very much exceed the value of the ivory obtained.

A native, on the contrary, may shoot an unlimited number of elephants without paying any licence whatever, with the exception of the graduated tax of seventy francs the kilo, which he pays after he has killed the elephant. The consequence is that natives are banging away at elephants from morning to night, and there must be very few elephants with less than half a dozen bullets in them.

The French Congo does not impose the super-tax, but only levies an export tax in a similar manner to that enforced in Uganda and Kenya. The natives of the Belgian Congo very quickly became aware of this super-tax, for the simple reason that when they went to the local trader to sell their ivory, it automatically dropped to half its previous value, whereas by transporting it to the other side of the river into the French Congo, they made a greater profit. Along the

M'Bomou River, therefore, are hundreds of small canoes hidden away amongst the reeds, and the absence of Government Posts on either bank of the river makes the smuggling of ivory simplicity itself.

I have already mentioned the great scarcity of game, due largely to the unrestricted sale of firearms. The native has no thought for the morrow, and will kill anything that he is able, in fact, anything in the way of meat, be it male, female, or their young, and it seemed an extraordinary form of eccentricity to them that I should be averse to the killing of a female of any species. There can be no doubt that if this unrestricted killing of game by natives is not stopped, it is only a matter of a few more years before the game of Central Africa will have entirely disappeared. When I visited the Belgian and French Congos twenty years previously, game was to be found in enormous quantities practically everywhere, but traversing now the same region, I found it a wilderness, even the natives having given up the attempt to find game, and discarding the rifle as useless, as it can no longer bring in the large quantities of meat that it did formerly.

Resuming my narrative, on the way up the river I managed to shoot a large white eagle from the canoe; shooting from the canoe, until one gets the knack of it, being incidentally a little difficult owing to the oscillation of the boat, and also to the fact that some one generally moves at the wrong moment. The white eagle makes excellent soup, but is too tough for eating in the ordinary way, though it did not appear too tough for the boat's crew, who made short work of it,



and it must be remembered that food of any description was extremely scarce.

On our arrival at the next camping-place, which happened to be on the French side of the river, I was met with the usual reply to my question whether game was to be had within a few miles of the village. They knew of none, but spoke of a spot a few miles up which was the home of a school of hippos, and if I felt disposed they would row me there. After having had food I therefore embarked in their canoe, and in about an hour's time, as we were approaching an island, I saw a school of seven hippos disporting themselves at a point where the river, flowing each side of the island, left a spot unruffled by the current on either side, and, with the advantage of deep water, enabling the hippos to rise and submerge at will on the approach of danger.

Telling the rowers not to approach the beasts closer than they could help, but on the contrary to hug the French bank of the river as far from them as possible, we got by all right, though not without the hippos keenly watching our progress, their pig-like ears and their eyes glued on to the canoe, and their short sharp grunts denoted that they were on the *qui vive*. However, we made our way upstream until completely out of range of their vision, and I then ordered the rowers to pull into the island, where I landed to force my way through the undergrowth, which was extremely thick, necessitating going on my hands and knees for the greater part of the way, with the exception of a track here and there made by the hippos on their journeys to and from the water.



After being severely cut about in the face and hands, I began to approach closely their position, silence being absolutely imperative if I was to succeed in getting a close shot at them, only the wariest having escaped the natives' onslaught. Worming my way on my stomach to get a sight of them, after a great many pricks from thorns, I managed to see them dimly through tiny openings in the thick undergrowth, it being evident then that in spite of all the care I had taken, they were aware of an enemy in the vicinity, every head being turned in my direction. Their hearing must be intensely keen, as on my moving a little nearer for a shot the heads disappeared. They had submerged, and I was afraid I had bungled it; but I did not move, keeping my eyes trained on the spot where they had disappeared, and by good luck one of them reappeared at about the same spot in which he had gone down only about fifteen yards from where I was lying. Now was my chance, and I took it, taking steady aim, but without any unnecessary delay. I fired, hitting him squarely between the two eyes, and he sank immediately without so much as a kick.

After satisfying myself that he was dead, I whistled for the canoe, and on its arriving I re-embarked and returned to camp, sending then the canoe back to wait for the hippo to come to the surface. This usually takes from two to four hours, the time taken being largely dependent on the condition of the animal. The fatter they are the quicker they come, and this one being in prime condition, started to show itself after about two hours.

The canoe, which went back to wait for the hippo to rise to the surface, after leaving a man on

guard over the animal, now returned with the joyful news, which put the whole village in a wreath of smiles. Other canoes then began to arrive, seemingly from nowhere, the only craft I had previously seen having been the one at the village, and I had certainly thought that the canoe in which I went to shoot the hippo was the only one in the district. I should say that the canoes are kept concealed in ordinary times, but on auspicious occasions, when large quantities of meat could be had gratis, that nothing short of an earthquake would keep them hidden, and the men away from the meat.

There were now six canoes all told tied up at the village, so, getting in one of them, I took the lead, and the procession left for the kill. The apex of the animal was about a foot out of the water, and the remaining hippos of the school were intently watching their dead, constantly rising and submerging and greatly interested in our arrival and the operations that were taking place.

The first thing the natives did was to land and select trees with bark suitable for making a rope, this being done in an incredibly short space of time. They then stripped the trees of the bark in lengths of about six feet and four inches in width, rolling it on their knees, and joining on other strips until the required thickness and strength was obtained, afterwards joining them all together into a very strong cable, the whole operation from first to last being completed inside of fifteen minutes. Two men pushed off in a canoe with the rope, and on arriving at the dead hippo, one of the men got into the water and dived with the rope under the floating body, passing



(Upper) THE LATE PETE PEARSON, GAME RANGER, NILE PROVINCE, UGANDA.

(Lower) A PALM OLIVE TREE.



the rope over and tying it securely round. The men in the other canoes then started to haul on the animal, and in this way it was landed close to a nice flat sandy beach, where the men jumped into the water, and putting their weight underneath it, proceeded to roll it on to dry land, as one would roll a barrel.

When the rope was taken off, the fun started. While the hauling was going on other natives had got hold of large stones, and were sharpening their knives as if their lives depended on it. They now came on and set about the business in a workmanlike manner, first removing the hide, after which the real pleasure set in, and the carcass was attacked in massed formation, a gentleman with a facetious turn of mind in the meantime surreptitiously jabbing a spear in the distended stomach of the animal and causing an explosion like the firing of a gun. Some of the meat-cutters tried to escape from the discharge of the excrement, but others took no notice of it whatever, and they were in a nice, jolly condition of filth. To make matters worse, now the puncture had been made, they carried on with the opening up of the stomach; and to complete the grand finale, two of them got right inside, their condition on emerging being better imagined than described!

However, everything comes to an end, and there was only one casualty—a man having jabbed the point of an eighteen-inch knife in the lower portion of the back of another native who persistently got in front of him and prevented him from hacking at the part of the animal that he had his eye on. The cut that this man got effectually put him *hors de combat*, and he retired to me, asking me to give him some *dawa*—



medicine. I told him that I had none with me, but would fix him up when we got back to camp ; but in the meantime I advised him to sit down and take it easy. He looked at me with a most peculiar expression on his face, and I wasn't sure whether he was going to laugh or cry, but he did neither, saying only that it could not be done and that for the moment he would rather stand up. This brought roars of mirth from my boy, who was standing close by ; and I have observed that they see a joke—providing it is on the other person—as quick if not quicker than a white man.

The canoes being now loaded and the natives, after a bath in the river, looking quite respectable again, we started on our homeward journey to the village. That night there were great jollifications. The women had been out and brought in large quantities of firewood, and the whole village, and outside the village as well, having been lit up, one could see the naked natives squatting round their respective fires, talking and laughing, and occasionally turning a piece of meat, this going on through the night—and in fact I don't think they went to bed. I also saw our wounded friend, whom I had now doctored, round the fire as happy as the rest, with this difference, that he was not squatting, but kneeling.

Our next day's journey, according to the canoe men, was to be auspicious, and a certain element of adventure embellished the conversation. It appeared that during our journey we had to pass a portion of the river supposed to be the habitat of a god or devil, and with the form of an enormous dragon which, when playfully inclined, or when people had not come



across with gifts, made short work of them by the simple method of swallowing the lot, canoe and all. Well, this gentleman, whatever his status, had to be propitiated, and here now the mysterious reason why money had been handed over by the Portuguese trader was explained. If money is not thrown into the river where this Oracle or dragon resides, disaster to the members of the expedition is bound to occur. Another peculiarity in the dragon is that he resents noise, but has a partiality for low, sweet music. Talking while passing his domain is sternly objected to, the delinquent being drawn into the water, the whole outfit, in fact, being endangered. Again, in introducing music, extreme care is necessary, as the slightest mistake on a top note might be disastrous.

After hearing all these tales from the "Arabian Nights," I suggested that the best means of keeping whatever it was quiet would be to load all my guns, and in particular to keep my elephant rifle handy. They did not think that would be of any use, as the Oracle was impermeable to gun-fire, though they had not heard if any one had tried it, knowing only that many canoes had been swallowed up and never seen again. I thought it as well, however, to have the guns ready in case of adventures of some kind; and all being in order and the baggage securely stowed, we pushed off, to the fond farewells of the villagers, waving sticks of meat and hoping that I would return soon to repeat the performance of supplying them with free meat.

The morning being nice and fresh, we were moving along in fine style, and on passing the spot where I had shot the hippo, I noticed that the parti-

cular pool was quite deserted ; but farther on I recognized the school—six now instead of seven as before. They were very much on the *qui vive*, and kept as far away from the canoe as possible, only exposing their heads for a few seconds and then submerging, evidently not to be caught napping again. Well, we had been going for about three hours when, sighting a large island in the centre of the river, it was excitedly pointed out to me that we were now approaching the abode of the Oracle. I could see nothing abnormal about the island, which resembled any other that I had come across in my journeys up and down African rivers, with perhaps this exception, that the river had considerably broadened during the last half an hour. The canoe men told me that the water on each side was very deep, natives formerly of the neighbourhood having told them so. I asked them the present whereabouts of the natives, to be told that they had made a village a long way off, having got tired of losing their people by being swallowed up by the dragon.

Conversation was now cut short, the Capita giving the warning that we were approaching the domain of the Oracle and commanding silence. I took hold of my elephant gun, releasing the safety catch, to be ready for any emergency that might arise. The dead silence which ensued seemed weird after the ceaseless chatter of the canoe men, but presently from the stern of the canoe one of the men started a low, sweet, whistling melody which he kept up incessantly for the half-hour that we were passing the island. After we had come abreast of it the Capita threw some money into the water, presumably that which he had

obtained from the Portuguese trader at Bangassou, and I also saw him fling out what I surmised was his own private property. At the same time the remainder of the crew cast from them what appeared to be of no great value, and likely enough what they wanted to get rid of. My boy also pitched in something, and I remember thinking at the time that I hoped, for the sake of economy, he had not pitched in something of mine. He then turned to me, and holding up two of my eggs in his hand, went through the motions of throwing them into the river; but shaking my head vigorously and spotting a piece of hippo meat lying at the bottom of the canoe, I reached down and handed it to him, at the same time making signs to indicate that he was to throw that. As he did so, it amused me to see the owner of the meat watching the operation with the greatest interest, his mouth being open as if he would like to say something, but of course that could not be done, absolute quietness being the order, and all one heard was the low, soft whistling at the stern.

I next absent-mindedly put my arm over the side of the canoe, letting the water run through my fingers, but my arm was immediately caught by the boy and dragged inside. I quickly grabbed the gun and peered into the water, but not seeing anything, I turned and looked at the boy, who only smiled and shook his head.

As we were passing the other end of the island the Capita gave out the news that the danger was over, upon which the silence was broken, and the noise that now took place was in striking contrast to the silence of the previous half-hour. What seemed to

me to be the most remarkable exhibition of endurance was how they had all managed to be able to keep perfect quietness for the space of thirty minutes. I have never known natives to stop talking for such a length of time before, and it must have been torture for them ; anyway, they made up for it now.

The fellow whose meat had been thrown overboard had evidently been brooding about it, as he now asked me the reason. " Well," I replied, " the boy wanted me to throw out two of my eggs, and if you come to think of it two little eggs to give to such an enormous beast would have been a shame and an insult, and the animal, or whatever it is, might have been annoyed. In that case, where should we be now, I ask you ? No, my boy ; I used my head in the matter, and reasoned it out this way : if you natives get a good feed of meat for nothing you are happy and contented, and do not want to kill any one—is that not so ? ”

When they replied in the affirmative, " Well," I went on, " I thought it would have been the same with that animal, or whatever it is. And anyway, I was right, and you all ought to thank me for bringing you through safe and sound, especially the boy who lost his meat, as, if it had not been for my catching sight of it, my boy might not have been able to restrain himself from throwing the eggs in the water, and so risking disaster. There is another thing about it which I have just remembered, which is that I shall now be able to have an omelette for lunch to-day."

At the close of my speech there were roars of laughter, and the man who had lost his meat,

vigorously scratching his head, was soon laughing as heartily as the rest.

Before reaching our next camping-place we had some very awkward rapids to contend with, the current being so strong in the narrow fairway that we were repeatedly forced back and had perforce to make for the bank and try some other means. I found that the only thing to be done was to off-load the canoe, and by means of ropes obtained from the villagers—there happened to be a village here—to haul the canoe bodily over the rocks into deep water. This, after a great deal of shouting and the assistance of the villagers, having been safely accomplished, we landed a little farther up the river, to find that, contrary to custom, this particular village was not built on the banks of the river, but a couple of miles inland on a small water-hole. I asked them why they did not camp on the big river, their reply being that the soil was much richer at this place, and the water sweeter.

After I had camped I received a deputation from the chief and surrounding headmen, with a petition that I would remain amongst them for a while, as there were some elephants in the vicinity. If I would stay there the next day, they said, a man would go out and locate their whereabouts. On my agreeing to do so, they departed, talking volubly amongst themselves, and about sundown two natives turned up to tell me they had located the elephants. When it came down to brass tacks, it turned out that they themselves had not seen anything, but had their information from natives at a village about five miles away, somebody having said that somebody else, who



had been gathering honey in the forest, had seen a lot of elephants. After hearing all this rigmarole, my own opinion was that nobody had seen anything, and that if I went out and myself saw nothing, I would not be disappointed.

The next morning, therefore, after a light and early breakfast, with one of my men and two of the native villagers as guides, I set out, travelling inland from the M'Bomou to traverse some very fascinating country, interspersed with tiny streamlets and having settlements of two or three huts. On arriving at these places our guides would prevail on one of the natives to accompany us through his district, at the boundaries of which the native would return home. It is an extraordinary circumstance that very few natives know anything of the country more than five miles from their own village, and in the case of natives living in the big Congo forest not more than two miles. If they went any farther they would become hopelessly lost. I call to mind that when once after an elephant that had been raiding a native shamba, I took one of the natives of the devastated shamba as a guide, so that on our return he would be able to show us the quickest way back. Well, I shot the elephant, and knowing how uncertain these natives were as to direction, I told him that if he didn't know the way we would follow our own spoor and the elephant's, but he assured me that he would take me back by a much quicker route than we had come. I calculated that it would take about one and a half hours—but we marched for a solid ten before fetching up at camp. I might add that no one was more pleased to be back than the guide. He had been very much afraid—as



he told my boy—that failure to find the camp would have qualified him for the high jump.

To resume. We tramped the whole of that day, and having the help of the native villagers, without sighting a single head of game. On our return back to camp we were overtaken by a tremendously heavy thunderstorm, so heavy indeed that in the space of a few minutes the water was washing over our ankles, and naturally we all got soaked to the skin.

I now found by inquiries and ocular proof that we could not go any farther by canoe. Although the rains were on, it would probably take another month before the big rapids ahead were sufficiently immersed to make it possible for a canoe to pass over them, so there was nothing for it but to continue my journey by land to Bili, in the Belgian Congo. Having therefore discharged all hands, and taking only one canoe man who wished to accompany me—he thinking that the job of personal boy, of which he knew nothing, was a soft one—I started the next day on my long journey.

Before taking the direct route I wished to visit the French Post of Raffale, in order, if possible, to get provisions for the journey. This meant that I had to make a march above the rapids and then cross by native canoes to the French side, after which there was a march of twenty kilometres to Raffale. We arrived there at noon on the following day, to find that the Post was in charge of a big native chief, who occupied the Boma, and was to all intents and purposes a District Commissioner. Very hospitable, he brought out a bottle of rum and invited me to join him. This man could speak French fluently, and during the

conversation I asked him the whereabouts of a friend of mine, an elephant hunter. I had missed him by three days, he said ; adding that my friend had been staying with him for over a month, and was a *bon garçon*.

Although the chief was a full-blooded native and as black as the ace of spades, he was classed as a European, and having all the rights and privileges as such, taking his place amongst Europeans as an equal, and joining them in their sundowners, etc. A similar case came within my experience at Bangassou, where the third important official at that Post was the Adjutant, a full-blooded native, who swanked about with a sword and rode up and down the streets on horseback. We have nothing analogous to this in British Colonies.

After leaving the chief I took my way down town to the principal store or factory, as they are called in this part of Africa, which happened to belong to a company called the Société des Sultanats, and had a European manager in charge ; in fact, he was the managing director of all the stores of this part of the country. This is a rich country, by the way, or was originally, for ivory. The method in the old days when I first went there was to issue to every native indiscriminately guns and powder, the result being that they would sally forth and blaze into anything and everything they saw, especially elephants, of which there were a prodigious quantity, killing them by the sheer weight of lead, and of course, if they were not killed on the spot, which seldom happened, they were always being picked up. The ivory was then taken into the company's Post and

bartered for ammunition or other trifles at the rate of twenty centimes the kilo.

On arriving at the store I informed the manager that I wanted to buy provisions, etc., for my journey through the Belgian Congo. "Oh yes," he said, "that will be all right, but as it is nearly lunch-time you must first come in and have lunch with me. In the meantime we must see that those porters of yours don't clear out, so I will give them each a table-spoonful of salt, which will make them contented, so that they don't bolt." Salt, therefore, having been duly issued to them, and two *Capitas* told off to see that they did not stray from the fold, we went in to lunch—which incidentally was a very good one—and I thought to myself that I had at last arrived at a place where there was "corn in Egypt." What was my disappointment, however, after lunch, to be told that the store was quite out of provisions, but in two months (D.V.), he expected to get quite a lot of stuff from Brazzaville. We both ransacked the store in case there might be something he had overlooked, the search at first producing six tins of milk, which, by the look of the labels, must have arrived in the country at the first occupation, as on opening them, I found them solidified into an insoluble mass. There were also one tin of cocoa, a tin of tea, a bottle of rum, and two packets of sugar; but that was all. I asked him if he could find me a little flour, but after saying that that was absolutely impossible as he had not sufficient for himself, he produced a kerosene oil tin of flour, which, on being opened, was absolutely swarming with weevils. I jibbed at this, but he said that as I had a long journey to make, and had

no food, it was surely better than nothing at all. He then explained that if the flour was put out in the sun and thoroughly dried—it certainly smelt mouldy enough—the weevils and any other insects could be extracted, after which some maize meal bought from the natives and mixed with equal quantities would make it into bread.

Such were the provisions with which I had to make a journey of four hundred miles, so settling up with the hospitable Frenchman, I thanked him for the most excellent lunch he had given me, and pressed on him a pair of field-glasses as a souvenir of an Englishman passing his store. He then blew his whistle for his porters and boys to bring up my men, but on their arrival I found that, in spite of his gift of salt, half of my men had bolted. However, the chief already mentioned sent down some men to make up the deficiency, together with some tomatoes, eggs, and chickens, so off we went, though, as it only wanted about two hours to sundown, I had to march for all I was worth to make the water before nightfall.

That night I managed to make the site of a deserted trading station on the banks of the M'Bomou River, and the next morning crossed the river just below the rapids and landed on the other side, where was supposed to be a track leading to a Belgian Post about a hundred miles away. On searching for this track, nothing definite could be seen, but there were innumerable tracks made by hippos on their nightly excursions for food. As there were no natives there to ask, I was forced to take one of the hippo tracks, which, after following for a couple of miles, circled round, making in the direction from which we had

come. Lost, therefore, I had to order even the porters to put down their loads and set all hands searching for the track.

There were no natives on the Belgian side of the river, the Belgian Government having, for various reasons, shifted them from the banks of the M'Bomou River inland to a distance of thirty kilometres from the river, one of the principal reasons assigned being the prevalence of sleeping sickness on the M'Bomou River, although I personally saw no signs of the disease.

We had been searching for about an hour, when we were met by a party of natives with small tusks of ivory making for the French side of the river, for the purpose of disposing of it to better advantage in French territory, where, as I have mentioned, the enormous tax levied by the Belgian Government did not operate. On their catching sight of my caravan, the smuggled ivory was very quickly concealed from observation; but as that had nothing whatever to do with me, on their putting me on the right track—that on which they had come—we parted the best of friends.

It was now getting late, and as they had informed me that if we marched fast we would arrive at a village about sundown, it was necessary to get a move on, my porters having no food with them, and I had bargained with them that they were on all occasions to sleep in villages.

On our march through this uninhabited country the absence of any sort of game was most remarkable, seeming as it did a likely territory for such, and indeed, during the entire march of over forty kilometres, not



a single head was seen. After we had proceeded for about twenty kilometres, we halted at a small running river and had tea and other light refreshments, two natives and a woman, on their way to the French Congo, passing while we were there. They thought it was not far to the village, and that if I hurried I would be able to reach it by sundown; so off we went again, I impressing on the porters the necessity of getting a move on, lest it should become dark and the tiny track lost. I myself pushed ahead with two boys, presently to meet two natives, who told me it was a long way yet, and they did not think I would be able to reach the village before sundown. So much for natives' idea of distance!

It was hopeless to think of camping where we were, as there was no water, the only thing to be done being to keep going and put a spurt on, which we did, covering the ground in fine style until it got quite dark and the track could not be seen at all. I then stopped, as it was useless to flounder in the bush at night with the safari miles behind, and contented myself with occasionally blowing my whistle. We heard the trickling of water in the distance, and some distance away, which I took to be several miles, I heard natives talking; but they evidently heard neither the whistle nor the shouting of my boys, whom I had sent along the road. It was nine o'clock before the first of the porters arrived, practically dead beat, and of course there was no food to be got that night. We had to make the best of it until the next morning, when we pushed on to the village, which turned out to be quite five miles farther on.

Apropos of native miscalculations in the matter of



distance, I one day met some postboys carrying the mail, and having asked them how far it was to one of the villages they had passed, was told that they did not know, as they kept going all the time, taking occasional rests and then going on again until they got there !

On our arrival at the village, as per contract, I had to pay off all the porters I had got from the French Congo, and endeavour to get others, which was quite a difficult performance, the headman of the village protesting that he had not men sufficient to carry the loads. I told him that if he did not supply me with porters it was impossible for me to go on, and he would have to send a runner to the nearest Belgian Post to the effect that I was here and could not get porters to carry me to the next village. That seemed to set him thinking, and as there was no game round about which would have made it worth while keeping me, the next day he found the requisite amount of men. We left his village, but on passing another after about an hour's march, two of the men bolted, so I had perforce to waste over an hour getting two more porters. Every day I had the same trouble, and at some villages had to wait two days before I could proceed.

This sort of thing happened the whole way to Bili, the Belgian Post, where I was promptly fined five hundred francs for entering a closed district, which was supposed to be a sleeping-sickness area, although I had permission to enter from the official at the other end. The Bili authorities further bothered me by refusing to allow me to proceed by caravan ; the Congolese law, they said, did not permit porters

to travel on a carriageable road. I therefore hired a Government lorry and arrived at the elephant-training station of Api, where they had no less than eighty young elephants undergoing training. I saw some of the elephants pulling a plough, but my private impression was that it could be done quicker and better with a motor tractor. It was certainly a good idea when started some thirty years ago, before the introduction of the motor car, but at the present time it is being carried on at a loss, and I was given to understand that the whole outfit was for sale. The price asked for a trained elephant being two hundred thousand Belgian francs, equal to about eleven hundred pounds English money, I candidly think that they are not worth it.

This place completed my long trek, in which I practically starved the whole way.

## CHAPTER XX

### I ARRIVE ON THE KIMBERLEY DIAMOND FIELDS

**K**IMBERLEY in the year 1890 was a town of ugly wood and iron buildings, the streets grey, the same colour as the soil that the diamonds came from, and at intervals there were enormous heaps of the same coloured soil, called debris heaps, these being the residue of the washings for diamonds in the early days. It was reputed that the precious stones were to be found in the streets, but any one caught doing anything of that kind quickly found himself in the hands of a section of the Government controlled by the De Beers Mines, which at the time of which I am writing employed no less than three hundred detectives for the prevention of the crime known as I.D.B.—illicit diamond buying. For that offence, in the case of a conviction, the unfortunate received a sentence ranging from five to seven years, to be served on the Cape Town breakwater then under course of construction.

From conversations I had with well-known I.D.B.'s, I gathered that it was fairly well conducted, and that it was extremely rare for a newcomer to be "trapped"; he had to be a known "buyer" before a trap stone was offered him. The first stone offered would be by way of a trial, and if he bought it he would be trapped next time. The procedure was

that the Committee who had charge of these affairs and had decided that a trap stone should be sent to a particular person, first carefully weighed the stone, and noted its colour and any peculiarity about it. Then again, to ensure a conviction, the diamond had to be found on the buyer's person or otherwise in his possession. I was told that quite a lot of trap stones were never recovered, and in the case of non-recovery the accused was set at liberty. The reason for these precautions was that a scandal in connection with the law would have been fatal for its continuance, making for its repeal.

The Kimberley mines were surrounded with barbed wire to the height of ten feet, armed guards patrolling inside the fence. The surface of this enclosed area was known as "floors," where the diamondiferous rock—"blue ground," as it was called—was spread out in the sun, water being poured over it, causing it to pulverize and release the diamonds, which, again, were passed through machinery, and then sorted and classified by experts. The native labourers are indentured for a specific period, during which they are not allowed to leave the mine, but are housed in what are known as compounds. A few days before their time has expired they have to undergo a rigorous search for any diamonds they may have purloined during their period of service. Occasionally a native who has stumbled on a large diamond will make an attempt to escape by scaling the barbed wire fence, in spite of the guard, who open fire with ball cartridges. From time to time some of them succeed, and it may be reckoned that a particularly good stone has left the mine for good.

There were a certain number of Europeans carrying on the illicit diamond trade, who did not handle the diamonds in any way until they were beyond reach of the I.D.B. law, but financed others, who acted as go-betweens, they themselves keeping on the safe side of the law. Before the Orange Free State, as it was then known, came into line with Griqualand West, these people employed mounted men to buy parcels of stones, the mounted agents being not particular from whom they bought, trusting to the fleetness of their horses to carry them to Freetown, which was just over the border, where was an hotel, and the financier waiting to receive the stones.

One of the I.D.B. runners, who was quite a youngster, showed me the calf of his leg, where a bullet had pierced it on his ride to the Free State with a parcel of diamonds valued at seven hundred pounds or thereabouts. From what he told me, the police had been watching for him, and knowing him to be an I.D.B. runner and coming along at a round gallop, guessed that he was carrying diamonds to Freetown. There were four or five mounted police waiting for him, and they called on him to stop, which only had the effect of making him go faster. The police then gave chase, but the I.D.B. runner, being the better mounted, was outdistancing them, when they opened fire, one shot taking effect in the leg. Knowing that he was hit, and being afraid of falling off, and caught with the stones, he allowed the parcel of diamonds to slide unobtrusively to the ground without their being seen.

Now the irony of it was that he neither fell off nor did the police catch him, but the stones were never

heard of again. After he had recovered from his wound, which did not take long, as it was only a flesh wound, he returned to where he had dropped the stones, which he was quite free to do, as no charge could have been brought against him, and on the contrary he could have brought a case against the police for unlawfully wounding, regarding which, however, he decided to let well alone. He told me that the police were quite cheery, and looked on it as a matter of sport. He also wondered if they had found the stones and kept mum about it. This same youngster afterwards joined the police, and was shot dead in the "Jameson Raid."

A good deal of the illicit diamond buying was done openly, many buyers boasting that they could not be caught. There were all sorts of contrivances to conceal the stones. Cape cart drivers would put them in the oil caps of their carts, and a big Zulu native once showed me his teeth, a magnificent set of big molars, one of which had been artificially hollowed out. He assured me he could secret a four-carat diamond in the hollow tooth, after which he would chew bread on that side to seal the cavity from observation. Even if he had to open his mouth for inspection, the tooth that had been hollowed out appeared to be a perfectly sound one.



## CHAPTER XXI

### AT THE RIVER DIGGINGS

I NOW made up my mind to try my luck at the river diggings, but before leaving for them I had a conversation with a young fellow as to the possibilities of making good there. He said that the only time he found anything was when his partner came back from Kimberley, which to one in the know needed no explanation. Of course the partner bought a stone or two from an I.D.B., and then came back to the "diggings" and entered them up in his diamond book—an elaborate affair, which included the date of finding the stone, the approximate weight, the approximate value, when sold, date of sale, what you got for it, and the buyer's name. All of which might seem very nice and proper, but did not alter the fact that these particulars could all be filled in without even having found the diamond. The only clause that mattered—"Who saw you find the diamond?"—was invariably left out. This point was illustrated in a court of law during my stay on the "diggings," when an expert was able to swear to a parcel of stones, but not where any particular stone came from, although in most cases he would be right. The problem is complicated by the fact that isolated stones are to be found on the Vaal River diggings, some of which

have the appearance of Kimberley stones, others seeming to have come from Bultfontein, Jagersfontein, Wesselton, and so forth. So there was a considerable amount of difficulty that the I.D.B. Act had to contend with.

Add that natives were permitted to take out licences and allowed to dig on the same terms as Europeans. These natives were always under suspicion, a labourer who had managed to purloin a stone having a very easy market in disposing of it.

The biggest stones found during my stay on the diggings were of the weight of one hundred carats each. The first and best was found at "Old Klipdam" by two diggers named respectively Harry Lloyd and Herbert Parkins, who were offered ten thousand pounds for the stone by a local diamond buyer, which they declined. One of the partners having taken the stone to England, where it was expected to get a better price, somebody who evidently knew nothing about it advised him to get it cut, which he did, and not only did it show an inferior colour to what it appeared in the rough, but it made the stone practically unsaleable. A celebrated Bond Street jeweller informed him that a person requiring a stone of this size would have it cut to his own fancy, and not to that of the seller. The whole thing was unfortunate, as after paying expenses, the net gain was only round about four thousand pounds.

The other stone was not so valuable. Although over one hundred carats in weight, it was a bad colour, and only realized locally twelve hundred and fifty

pounds. The finding of it I put down to nothing but luck, as the claim-holder happened to stroll up at the psychological moment when the boy had picked it out of the gravel and was looking at it. Whether he would ever have seen anything of the stone if he had not turned up at the right moment is doubtful. I asked several diggers their opinion on the point, all being unanimous in thinking that he would not have known that a diamond of that size had ever rested in his claim, though, of course, they may have been mistaken.

It calls to mind an amusing incident—scarcely amusing, however, to the man concerned. There was an old gentleman of a studious turn of mind, who had drifted to the “diggings,” and may have been a school-master at some period of his career, as he was something of that type. Several of the diggers used to love to get him to play cards, he being very absent-minded, and continually thinking about something other than the matter in hand. It follows that he seldom rose a winner, though I ought to add that the stakes when Darling, the individual in question, was playing, were never high.

Well, having arranged one day to make one of a party at euchre, he left his claim a little before the usual time, and on arriving for the game was in quite good spirits, as he had found a three-carat diamond, worth probably fifteen to twenty pounds. Asked by the company to see the stone, he fumbled first in one pocket and then in another, looking up presently with a rueful expression on his face. “I put it in my mouth,” he explained, “and forgot I had done so. Now I remember that while coming up from

the claim I felt something in my mouth and spat it out."

Everybody laughed except Darling, who excused himself and retraced his steps to where he thought he had spat out the diamond, but although he searched diligently, and hunted for it every time he passed by the same way, he never saw it again.

I call to mind another amusing incident while I was on the "diggings" in which nobody got hurt. About a dozen miners were at the Club, sitting down with their drinks by their side, when all of a sudden a tremendous clap of thunder set every one of those diggers grabbing for his glass and holding on to it; much laughter being caused afterwards when this instance of the first law of nature was referred to. I might add that the clap was followed by rain in torrents, a regular cloud-burst, and soon all sorts of utensils came floating past the Club, such as plates, dishes, bedsteads, chairs, and the whole of the next day the diggers were out collecting their property.

The life of a diamond digger is rather fine, as one lives in the hopes of one day coming back to the tent a millionaire. However, it was not my luck to do anything of that description. I stuck it for about eighteen months, with varying fortunes, like many others being at times reduced to eating mealy meal, and forced to owe the labourers their pay till a find turned up. That they did not particularly mind if one could find a couple of shillings each for them to purchase a bottle of Cape brandy, a raw and fiery spirit which had the effect of laying them up all day Sunday. This would go on until the luck changed

and the boys were paid their back pay, and, in the case of a good find, would receive an *imbarcela*—tip—when they invariably left to try some one else who had better luck, but they always had the sense to wait till they did get their pay. I recall to mind one day when my claim adjoined that of a man named Kemp, a one-legged man who, I was told, fell off a wagon while under the influence of Cape smoke—Cape brandy. This man Kemp had been finding very well, having taken out of his claim diamonds to the value of four thousand pounds. I was working bang up against his claim, and at a hanging wall about six feet in height, the boundary line being demarcated by inches, when I was attracted by a commotion in the claim. The labourers were screened from my view, as I was engaged in sorting at the time, and on going to see what the noise was about, I found that a boy engaged in picking this particular gravel was sitting on the ground holding his foot. He said that some of the wall had fallen and injured his foot, but as I could not see any injury, I told him he had better return to the tent and rest it. When I arrived at the tent, he was not to be found, so I took it that he had gone to the Native Location. He was more or less a naked boy, only wearing a pair of very old trousers.

All this time I had had the bad luck to only find very small diamonds, just sufficient to pay for the water for washing the gravel, which last had to be brought six miles by wagons from the Vaal River, the cost being half a crown the barrel, and it took quite a number of barrels to complete a day's wash-up.



My surprise may be imagined when, a month later, a very swell native turned up on the claim. He was dressed in an expensive black diagonal suit, brown boots, a broad-brimmed hat with a silk pugaree, and carrying a sjambok in his hand. On his greeting me with a *verdah, baas*—good-day, sir—I asked him, rather sharply, what he wanted, as we did not favour swell natives, having the idea that natives dressed in an expensive manner obtained the money from other sources than work. I did not recognize him when first I spoke to him, but he soon recalled himself to me as the boy who had injured his foot a month before, adding that he wished to come back to work.

Evidently he considered the claim too good to leave, and had he not arrived with an expensive outfit I have no doubt that I should have taken him on again, but I presume that he could not resist showing off his fine clothes. I was so taken aback that I could do no more than wave him off, he taking the hint and departing “one time,” as the saying is. It is pretty certain that his elegance accounted for what I had considered bad luck.

Some months after, I made a find of a couple of hundred pounds, and tossed up whether I should stick on or shift. The latter got it, so I left the diamond fields, and drove to Johannesburg, a matter of three hundred miles. The city, at the time of my arrival in 1892, was unpaved and very dusty, constant whirlwinds sweeping through the town, with that thick red dust that clings to one's hair and clothes. Everywhere were to be seen notices



pasted on the doors of the shops, "Closed on account of the dust." Johannesburg was a very different place then to what it is now, having been at that time a wood and iron town, and every other place a bar.

## CHAPTER XXII

### ON THE MURCHISON RANGE

I NOW fell in with a couple of young fellows just out from home, and on talking matters over with them, we decided to trek to the Low Country of the Zoutpansberg and Murchison Range. We found that we should require a Scotch cart—a large two-wheeled vehicle usually drawn by from four to six oxen—and some oxen for the purpose, so we visited the live-stock sales, which were held every Wednesday and Saturday on the market square, and succeeded in purchasing six trek oxen and a cart.

One of the oxen having very long horns and sore feet, we promptly named him “Lightfoot.” I discovered afterwards, when I knew something more about cattle, that he was suffering principally from old age.

Provisions were the next thing, and rifles, of which last any amount were to be had, the market being glutted with them and with revolvers, practically every man from the Old Country having the impression that his time would be taken up in keeping wild beasts off, whereas it was quite the opposite, nothing dangerous being within hundreds of miles of Johannesburg. The country was in the hands of Boer farmers, who had a decided objection to any one shooting off their buck, as all the superfluous game

had been shot off years before. Hence the large quantities of firearms at the auction sales. I should think that if it had struck any one to buy up these rifles, which were quite new, never having had a shot fired out of them, and ship them back to England, he would have made quite a good thing out of it. We managed to buy three good ones very cheaply.

Our preparations being completed, we made a start on our journey northwards to the Zoutpansberg, the first halt of any note being the Albert Silver Mines, where the few people we met gave us such harrowing tales of the awful effects of working there that we came to the conclusion that it was no place for us. Not least of the evils that befell one who tempted fate by working there, was that after six months all one's teeth fell out. Of course, what they must have been referring to was the steaming of the copper plates, which is done periodically, to remove as nearly as possible all the amalgam from the plates.

From the silver mines we continued our way northward and entered what is known as the bush veldt, where one of my companions and myself had quite an adventure. We had outspanned—camped—for the day, and meat being *non est*, two of us decided to try our hands at shooting a buck, and struck off into the bush to that end. Being perfectly green, we did not take our position of the sun in its relation to the camp, but wandered on in our search for a buck, eventually to see one, though he had evidently seen us first, as he was going like fun. We both fired, and, needless to say, we both missed, but followed it, not knowing but that we might have scored a hit.

The pursuit was our undoing, as it now began to get dusk, and we were reluctantly compelled to return, as we thought, to camp. After going for some distance it became dark, and with no signs of the camp ; but as we had travelled fast, we thought that it should be close by, so we halted and shouted, and could not conceive why there was no response. We then decided to fire a couple of shots, thinking that the noise would be sure to be heard at the camp, but as there were no answering shots, we realized that we had lost our way, as indeed we had. The situation was not improved by our growing hunger and the thought of the flesh-pots at the camp.

When the moon rose, which it did at about nine o'clock, and nearly at the full, we went on again and walked till we were thoroughly exhausted, stopping then to lie down, and taking the precaution of pointing the muzzles of our rifles in the direction in which we were travelling, so that we would have an idea in the morning as to which route we had better take. We were awake at daylight, feeling more ravenous than ever, and on looking at our rifles and seeing that they pointed towards the river, we came to the conclusion that it would be unwise to leave the water, hunger being bad enough, but thirst worse.

We had not proceeded very far that morning, when lo, we discovered fresh footprints in the sand of the dried-up bed of a stream. We both exclaimed together that some one had been along there, thinking with momentary delight that they were the footprints of our comrades looking for us ; but remembering that lost people invariably travelled in a circle, we measured our boots in the depressions, to find to our consterna-

tion that they fitted exactly, and knowing now that we were hopelessly lost.

The country was as flat as a billiard table, not a hill or any elevation anywhere, so we had only the sun as an aid to travel south to civilization. We saw buck occasionally, but were so short of cartridges, having only one apiece left, that we dared not fire. I think we only took three each with us, as we had no intention when we left the camp of going far afield. More hungry than ever at the sight, I came across what I thought was mushrooms, and invited my pal to come on and fall to, but he, being more cautious, insisted on my trying them first, which I did, the result being disastrous. I became violently ill, and commenced vomiting, which, I think, must have saved me, as I found out afterwards that they were a species of toadstool, although many edible fungi are to be found in the bush. The toadstools had one good effect, altogether staying my hunger, my pal thereupon wishing that he had taken a chance himself.

When we went to sleep that night we calculated that we could not have travelled less than thirty miles in a southerly direction. We had by this time given up all hope of striking our camp, and the next morning, this being the third day, we were continuing our progress to the south when, about eight o'clock, a quite respectable hill came into view. We made for it, hoping that something would be able to be seen from the summit, which proved correct, as on reaching the top, to our great joy, we saw a thin spiral of smoke mounting above the trees, which we sat and watched, taking very careful bearings of its direction,

knowing that on leaving the hill the smoke would be invisible to us. Leaving the hill, after about an hour's walk we struck the northern transport road, and shortly afterwards met two Dutchmen riding transport to Pietersburg in the northern Transvaal. They were just going to have breakfast and invited us to join them, the meal consisting of maize meal and fresh butter only, but one of the finest meals I have ever had, as going without food for three days with a healthy appetite makes one realize what it is to be hungry.

The Dutchmen said that it was fortunate that we had decided to travel south, as it was waterless to the north, and uninhabited even by natives for a distance of more than sixty miles. They also informed us, to our joy, that they had passed our cart and oxen about two hours back; so, after thanking them for their hospitality, we wended our way back to camp, where, instead of finding our comrades in tears, we were greeted with louds shrieks of laughter which could not be suppressed.

This incident happened over thirty years ago, and I have done much travelling in the bush since that time, but have never lost myself again, and I have never heard of any one else properly lost and found again who was lost a second time, as experience teaches one to look at the position of the sun when leaving camp.

Our next camp of importance was the historical one of Bronkhorst Spruit, where Colonel Anstruther, in command of a detachment of British soldiers, after repeated warnings by the English Colonials that the Boers were massing, was ambushed, and two hundred



and forty British soldiers were shot down in twenty minutes. The report goes that, before reaching Bronkhorst Spruit, he was met by a party of Boers, who ordered him to return to Pietersburg, which order he refused to obey, saying that he was ordered to Pretoria, and to Pretoria he would go. It is also reported that the men were marching at ease, with their rifles on the wagons, and so without means to defend themselves when, soon after their arrival at Bronkhorst Spruit, the massacre took place. This happened in the first Boer War of 1881.

We next arrived at Pietersburg, then, as now, the most important town of the northern Transvaal, which, of course, is not saying much, as at the time of which I am writing there was only one street, with open water furrows, led from the adjacent river through the streets, and used for domestic purposes and irrigating private gardens. On leaving the town we plunged straight downhill, the gradient being so steep that we had to hang on to the back of the cart to prevent it coming to grief. However, with the one mishap—that of an ox breaking his fetlock while crossing a stony river, and having to be slaughtered—we arrived safely at our destination, the Ellerton Mine, at that time in full blast. Here we sold the outfit, including the aged “Lightfoot,” who was promptly made into beef. A man remarked in my hearing, after a desperate attempt to masticate a piece of it, that he would like to meet the man who had sold the animal.

We all signed on as miners, men being in great demand, as owing to the extreme unhealthiness of the district, half of the staff were down with malaria fever

in a most virulent form. It should be added that there was a large proportion of deaths, with the absence of the wherewithal to make coffins, and it eventually came to pulling down the verandahs for that purpose.

The drinks affected by the miners were principally champagne and stout mixed, and occasionally whisky and quinine—but not much of the quinine; in fact, as one old-timer remarked, “Quinine? what’s the good of quinine? give me whisky; I can suck it up like a sponge.” Their pay was thirty shillings for an eight-hour shift; that is to say, about fifty pounds a month, counting overtime. A large number had scores up against them of from eighty to one hundred pounds, and when the collapse came and the Ellerton shut down, I am afraid the storekeepers went short.

I had left the Ellerton Mine before the collapse, and secured work as a miner on the Silati River Gold Mining Company. There one man did all and every kind of work, controlling one hundred and fifty boys during his shift of twelve hours. Now under the Transvaal mining laws of that date, 1892–3, no native was permitted to blast; but it was done there, as it would have been impossible for one man to have blasted the nine drives simultaneously, so as to allow the gas to escape and enable the boys to come down again to the mine and complete the other part of their shift. The system of blasting was as follows: with two boys, one made up the charges beforehand at the magazine, returning then with the charges down the mine and along to the different drives, and charging where the boys had finished their two-foot holes. If a boy had not finished his hole, he lost his pay for



THE AUTHOR SEATED ON THE BODY OF A DEAD LION.





that particular shift; but not many of them failed to complete their allotted tasks, and a good proportion of them had worked in the mine for as long as nine years. Then came the blasting, one good boy being placed in each drive, and that drive fired first which accorded with its distance and its position in the mine. For instance, I would shout *Cheeser*—fire—and the boy would reply *Ja, Baas*, and fire, after which, shouting back *Cheesili*—fired—he would then run to where I had placed myself in a strategic part of the mine; and so it would go on until the whole of the nine drives had been fired. Ultimately, the nine boys being gathered around me, the shots are counted as they go off, the boys being particularly interested in this, as a shot misfiring causes a real danger, another hole having to be drilled in close proximity to the one that has not gone off. The idea of this is that the new charge will explode the old one, so woe betide the boy who, owing to carelessness, allows the drill to deviate and enter the old charge, when an explosion will take place. Fortunately we did not have an accident during my time there.

This went on very successfully for about two months, when one day the shift boss, a Queenslander, who was engaged in putting down an incline shaft, instructed me to put in a couple of “pop holes”—small charges of dynamite—at each side at the bottom of the shaft, so that he could put in a support for the rails. My idea of a “pop hole” being quite different to his, I put in too heavy a charge, and blew away about three times as much as was required. That finished me, and I went and got my cheque, and was off again.



I now proposed to go to Mashonaland, the territory concessioned by the British South Africa Company. My road lay in the direction of the Ellerton Mine, and in going there I had to cross the Groot Letaba, where a peculiar individual, a German by the name of Max Young, had a trading station. As I before remarked, this country is extremely unhealthy, and Max Young informed me that the reason he was able to live in that part of the country, when every one else who had lived there before had died, was because he ate no meat, with the exception of chicken soup. That seemed quite a good idea, until I heard shortly afterwards that he had also died. He did a large trade, having hundreds of native women with their baskets of maize waiting in front of the store long before sun-up to trade their corn, many of them having come from Gungunyana's country, some forty or fifty miles away. The maize did not fetch a big price at the store, a cotton handkerchief purchasing twenty-five pounds of it, the handkerchief being valued for the purpose of trade at a shilling, though I should imagine that a dozen could be bought wholesale for that price. Of course, Max Young had to transport the maize to Pietersburg, a matter of two hundred miles, over very rough tracks.

After a couple of days with him I continued my journey, my outfit consisting of a riding donkey and two pack donkeys, the pack donkeys being driven by a boy. On the afternoon of the first day, while travelling slowly along a native footpath, I was startled to hear two sharp growls on my left in the long grass. On my right the grass had been recently burned; in fact, some of the dried wood was still



smouldering, and immediately afterwards a lion sprang over me and the donkey, landing on the bare ground where the grass had been burnt, and, circling about me, growled and made off.

It has always been a puzzle to me whether the lion was so out of practice as to miss his spring, or if he had only scented the donkeys, and when too late scenting me and so balking his spring. Leaving it to others to determine, I am reminded of an incident which occurred during the march of the Pioneer Column into Mashonaland, among the troopers being a man named Payne. Now it was customary for scouts to be sent out every day, and on their return they had to report everything that they had seen; but nobody seemed to see anything worth reporting except Payne. Well, Payne came back one day and reported that while riding along the track a lion sprang at him and missed him, the news being received with abject silence. The next day another man, who had heard the yarn, was sent out to reconnoitre, and returned to be bombarded with the usual question as to what he had seen. "Well," he said, "I saw Payne's lion practising the jump."

To resume. There were two lionesses a little farther on trotting along the burnt grass, but they took absolutely no notice of me whatever. Later in the afternoon I had an attack of malaria fever, and camped close to a native village. Lions were around most of the night, evidently after the donkeys, to which they are very partial; and as the donkeys are perfectly aware of it they have to be securely tied up to prevent them breaking loose and becoming an easy prey to the waiting lions.

The fever having gone down in the night, I was able to continue my journey in the morning, and soon after starting I struck the road from Pietersburg to the Ellerton Mine, a little farther along meeting a miner clad only in his shirt. He informed me that he had been drinking at a wayside store, and had left to go home to his camp, but feeling tired on the road, he had made himself comfortable under a tree, taking off his clothes and putting them under his head. On awaking in the morning he found that everything had vanished, and was now making his way to the nearest store to be fitted out again. I came across this man some years afterwards in Bulawayo, and having reminded him of our previous meeting, he informed me that when on a carouse he had never since made the mistake of taking off his trousers and boots.

That day I fetched up at a store on the Koodoos River, the same place that I had called at on my way down. The store, owned by a firm in Pietersburg, was shut down, no sign of life being visible; and I heard afterwards that both the young fellows who had been running it when I passed on my way down had died of malaria fever. Two other people—donkey farmers—whom we had met on our way down had also died, one of them having fallen sick, and the other nursing him till he in turn became sick. They were discovered by the Pietersburg police and buried by them, which seemed to be the principal duty of the police up there.

I next arrived at a store kept by a Russian named Jumbo; Jumbo's, as the place was called, being situated about half-way from Pietersburg to the

Ellerton Mine, and considered the limit where Europeans could thrive. I could not find out why the storekeeper was called Jumbo, as he was by no means an outsize of a man; and as no one could enlighten me, I came to the conclusion that he had an unpronounceable name and, tired of being repeatedly asked to spell it, invented the incongruous pseudonym.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE MATABELE REBELLION

ON arriving at Pietersburg, which seemed very cold after the humid atmosphere of the Low Country, I sold my donkeys and contracted with an Englishman, who had a wagon and bullocks, and was bound for Fort Victoria, Mashonaland, a matter of from six weeks' to two months' trek. We started off all right, but did not travel fast, the owner not having a proper driver, and relying on punching the bullocks himself. Now one must be brought up from childhood to wield skilfully these enormous long bullock whips with effect, as they have an uncomfortable knack of getting entangled round one's neck, which, to say the least of it, is decidedly disconcerting. However, despite of the owner's inexperience, after an uneventful journey we arrived on the Crocodile River at the crossing known as the Middle Drift. There were about thirty wagons outspanned on the river, as it was a great place for transport-riders to rest their bullocks, and there was also good shooting of both birds and buck. Again, lone wagons had to wait for others to help them through the heavy sand at the drift or ford.

It was a very picturesque sight to watch the wagons being hauled through the drift, as it was usual to tackle the drift late in the afternoon when the sun,

as the sailors express it, was "over the fore sheet," and the whole landscape tinged with a ruddy glow. Four spans—that is, sixty-four oxen—are hitched on to the loaded wagon, and the drift tackled amid a great din and dust, the shouts of the native drivers, and the cracking of the long bullock whips, which sound like rifle shots. The bullocks strain at the wagon, sunk up to its axles in the sand, and occasionally a steel cable will snap with a loud metallic bang. It means about half an hour's strenuous exertion for both man and beast until the wagon safely emerges on the other bank, after which the other wagons follow, and so it goes on till night falls and every one is gathered round the camp fires.

We were met on the other bank by a detachment of the British South African Police, before proceeding farther being required to take the oath of allegiance to the Chartered Company and be Burghers of the State and defend the country while in it.

It used to be the custom of the Chartered Company to transport any characters deemed undesirable over the frontier into the Transvaal. This happened to a celebrated filibuster named Bill Dunn, formerly of the Stellaland Brigade—Bechuanaland having been formerly known as Stellaland. The Stellaland Brigade were a party of freebooters who, taking advantage of two Stellaland chiefs, Linchwe and Monkaran, who were hostile to each other, used to fight for either of the chiefs who would engage them. The rate of pay given for the prestige of having white men to fight for them was two head of cattle a day.

Warren's Expedition came up and dispersed these freebooters, and Bill Dunn, being one of them, made

tracks for the new country of Mashonaland ; but with the Chartered Company not falling in with his methods of getting rich quick, they had promptly transported him over the border to the Transvaal. Bill, however, wanted to get back, and the tale goes that he joined up as a guide to a missionary, who had recently come out from the Old Country, and was proceeding to Mashonaland to found a mission station. The police were passed all right—being in such respectable company he was not suspected—and they proceeded on their way, coming to a settlement of Mashonas one Sunday when two or three natives were about, on the look out for any small trifle that could be picked up.

The missionary promptly seized the opportunity to hold a service, at the close of which Mr. Dunn, who had acted as interpreter, was asked to tell them to come again and bring all their friends with them. Bill suggested encouraging the congregation of three with a present of a blanket apiece, the natives going away highly delighted, and promising to bring *meningi*—plenty—for the next service, when about two thousand rolled up, very eager that they should not by any chance miss it.

It was now the missionary's turn to be delighted, and when the hymns started the natives made a most frightful din in their endeavour to earn a blanket. Through Mr. Dunn they were then thanked for their attendance, told it would be a pleasure to see them all again next Sunday, and that they could now go home ; but this they refused to do, and were continually asking *Wapi ngubu?*—where are the blankets ? None being forthcoming, after about two hours they went



away, under the distinct impression that they had been had.

The next Sunday not a soul turned up, but the missionary, seeing two or three natives passing, told Mr. Dunn to ask them why they had not come to the service. His feelings may be imagined when they replied, *Ikona ingubu, Ikona sebenza*—no blankets, no work. It need scarcely be added that on their arrival at Fort Victoria Bill and he parted company.

We were now getting near our destination, and there were rumours of unrest amongst the Matabele, several transport riders who had Matabeles working for them having lost their servants, together with any rifles and ammunition they could lay their hands on. This seemed a sure sign to the old hands that something was brewing, and everybody was on the qui vive. We had not long to wait till it was brought home to us, without the possibility of a mistake, by discovering dead bodies of natives, evidently Mashonas or Makalakas recently assegaied. All the wagons now made haste to reach Fort Victoria, where we found that martial law had been proclaimed, and all preparations being made to repulse an attack on the town. The Southern Rhodesian Volunteers had been called up, prospectors and outside traders were coming in, and all persons were ordered to sleep in the Fort at night as a precaution against surprise.

Captain Lendy, an ex-Royal Artillery man, was in command of the town. The Fort was fairly large, too large, in fact, for the amount of men available to defend it. It had brick walls nine feet high in which loopholes were being hastily improvised, and inside was a tower on which was mounted a Gatling gun.

An hour before dawn, this being the usual time in which natives make their attack, we stood to arms till after daylight.

A few days afterwards, a large body of natives was seen advancing on the Fort, and at the sound of the bugle every one took up his allotted position at the barricades. The natives approached within five hundred yards, signalling, then, that they wished to parley, and on being given the invitation, some of the leading chiefs came forward, including Lobengula's nephew, M'kundan. We had at this time a lot of native refugees in the Fort, who had fled from the Matabeles, and were in the most abject state of terror, thinking that they would be given up to their enemies. Captain Lendy, having met the chiefs to ask what they wanted, informed them that they had broken the treaty made between the Chartered Company and Lobengula by crossing the Shashi River without permission, that being the boundary of the British South Africa's territory at that time. They replied that they had followed some Mashonas who had stolen cattle from them, and having tracked them to the Fort, required their surrender. Lendy thereupon agreed that if they could describe any particular native he would be handed over, but as they persisted in their demand for all the refugees, this was, of course, refused. They were then told that the Administrator, Dr. Jameson, had been wired for, and would arrive some time the next day from Fort Salisbury himself to give them the final decision. In the meantime, by way of impressing the chiefs with what they would be up against should they take an unreasonable attitude in the negotiations, they were taken up on

the Tower and shown the working and shooting of the Gatling gun. I myself was not present, but a man who was told me that they took a very supercilious attitude, and remarked in Zulu, that the gun would not hit a man in a month. However, back they went to the Impi—regiment—which mustered about eight hundred strong, and then altogether drew off about a mile away, presumably to wait for the arrival of Dr. Jameson. They had the Fort fairly surrounded, and there would have been very little chance of the Mashona refugees escaping by flight.

The next day Dr. Jameson arrived with Captain Allan Wilson, afterwards Major Wilson, who was mounted on his celebrated cream horse. The chiefs were then summoned for a parley, but not allowed inside the Fort, being halted outside between a double row of armed men. Dr. Jameson gave them a good talking to, telling them they had violated the Treaty, and that no refugees would be given up to them on any consideration. Finally, pointing to the sun, then in the position of 10 a.m., and again pointing to where it would be at 3 p.m., he told them that if they had not made for the frontier by that time he would send his men after them.

Their answer was a spit of contempt, as they had no doubt sized up the strength of the garrison, and for some time they made no signs of moving off, but some two hours later they started in a desultory manner, evidently to camp. It was thought that without doubt they meant mischief, and as there were quite a number of women and children in the Fort, barbed wire was being hastily made into entanglements to surround it. Being large, it required about

four times the number of men then available to make an adequate defence.

It was then decided to give them some sort of inkling what a few white men trained to the use of arms could accomplish against a preponderating number of natives like themselves, and at 2 p.m. we had orders to saddle up and engage them, thirty mounted men riding out to engage an enemy of eight hundred strong. We caught them up about three miles from the Fort, moving very slowly; but on catching sight of us they increased their pace, the stragglers in the rear catching up with the main body. We then broke into a gallop, gaining on the Impi, and catching them up at the granite kopjes, where, coming into range, we dismounted and opened fire. They replied, but as we were in skirmishing order and lying down with the bridle over the arm, we made a small and difficult mark for any but trained shots at that distance—five hundred yards. The native range, by the way, was one hundred yards or less, their weapons being more obsolete than ours, and ammunition always a great item of expense with a native, as it has to be procured by illicit means.

We noticed that being as they were in close formation, they were getting pretty heavy casualties, but after a little of this lesson they charged, whereupon we promptly retreated until they were tired of running and gave it up. Dismounting again, we opened fire on the leading mob, with disastrous effect, and they retired to get out of range, thinking, no doubt, that those in the rear should be given a chance to stop a bullet or two. We employed the same tactics till we had them properly on the run, making for the

frontier with all speed, after which we returned to the Fort late in the afternoon, without suffering a casualty, and bringing along the horse belonging to Lobengula's nephew in tow; its rider having been shot during the engagement.

It would not be out of place to relate here the reason for the Impi's appearance at Fort Victoria, as given me by a Matabele chief after the war. It appears that some Mashonas or Makalakas had stolen cattle belonging to the Matabeles close to the border, which had been returned, but on going again through the stock, it was found that a calf was missing belonging to the Insukumeni Regiment, an outpost regiment close to the frontier, and mustering two thousand fighting men. Greatly annoyed at this and taking it as an insult, they complained to King Lobengula, permission being asked to punish the Mashonas living in the Concession granted to the Chartered Company. Lobengula, having heard their argument, and having a native secretary who could write English, said he would write a letter to the officer commanding Victoria, and when the Impi reached the frontier, a runner was to be sent ahead, leaving the others to wait for his return with a reply. He added that on no consideration were they to cross the Shashi River (the boundary) until a reply was received giving them permission to enter the Concession occupied by the white people, and if they entered without the necessary permission, it would be better for them that they never returned to him.

The Impi then left under the command of M'kundan, and came to the Shashi River, and there they held an Indaba, or debate, the result of which was that it



would be extremely foolish to send the letter on ahead to Captain Lendy, the O.C. of Victoria, as they considered that as a friend of the Mashonas he would naturally warn them, and they would then miss their revenge. They decided, therefore, to fall on the Mashonas first, and deliver the letter afterwards. In that case they would have their revenge, the letter would be delivered, and everybody would be satisfied—truly a very probable native reasoning.

After the skirmish with the Matabele, the fat was fairly in the fire, and all preparations now were made for war. Captain Wilson then enrolled the Mashonaland Border Police, numbering sixty mounted men, and this Force I joined. We afterwards formed a camp on the Umshagashi River, and patrolled the border, preparations being made, in the meantime, for the invasion of Matabeleland. Horses and men were coming up from Pretoria and Johannesburg, together with saddlery, munitions, etc. I might add that the old Martini rifle was in use at this time, and as it was still fitted with the short lever, if the cartridge case was the slightest bit dirty, it would jam in the breech, which meant knocking out the empty shell with a ramrod, giving one a poor chance in a tight corner. This was continually being drummed into us, and our cartridges were frequently examined by the orderly officer for verdigris. Later, the long lever was introduced, which made the Martini a sound rifle; but at that time we did not have it, and it was more or less of a toss-up whether it would extract or not. Our system was to give the lever a very hard jerk and keep the breech of the rifle greasy.



The discipline was strict in this corps, which was entirely military, and nearly all the members, with the exception of myself, had been in other military organizations. The before-mentioned Bill Dunn was one of my comrades, and was afterwards promoted on the field for bravery. Most of the men were hard drinkers, and Captain Wilson used to say that he had not much time for a man that could not drink, as, cards excepted, with this sort of job he could do very little else. Not that drink was supposed to be allowed in the camp.

We were housed in tents, sleeping six in a tent on the ground, and rolled up our blankets in neat piles in the morning, a tent inspection being held every day, together with a parade of all the men in the camp, when the smartest soldier on parade "took the stick," *i.e.* became commanding officer's orderly. There was much competition for this honour, my particular tent singling out a man each day and getting him on parade without a fault. His cartridges were burnished as well as all brass buckles, etc., and even the bottoms of his boots were blacked.

This was where our chance of a drink came in. The duty of a commanding officer's orderly was to stand with his horse outside the orderly tent when the bugle for defaulters was blown, there to wait till the proceedings terminated, which generally took about half an hour. He would then be given a dispatch to take to Victoria, and told that he need not return till the evening; which meant that having delivered his dispatch and put his horse in the stable, he was free for the day. On returning, he would not forget to put a couple of bottles in his wallets, and on being

challenged by the sentry and replying, "Commanding officer's orderly," he would then be permitted to pass without being subject to the usual search for liquor. The couple of bottles meant a singsong for his particular tent. Of course it was winked at, but it was encouragement for the men to strive for that particular honour.

One man each day acted as mess orderly, his duty being to draw the rations and cook the food, which, when it was bully, gave him a soft time. This sort of routine and patrolling the border went on for a couple of months. In the meantime men and horses were coming up from the south (Johannesburg and Pretoria), and a good proportion of them were signing on for the coming campaign. Troops were being formed, my own particular troop being named No. 1 troop, and the others numbered respectively A, B, C, etc., C troop being the Dutch contingent. There was also an Artillery Corps under Captain Lendy.

The question of the amount of rations to be taken with us having arisen, the 1890 pioneers stuck out for three months' full rations, as they had had a bad experience when they came up with the first expedition, having had to subsist chiefly on native produce, such as monkey-nuts, kaffir corn, etc., and they did not intend to be let down again, if they could help it. After a great deal of argument on both sides, the Chartered Company gave way, and three months' supplies were loaded on the wagons.

On a memorable day in September 1893 we moved forward under the command of Major Allan Wilson. Another column had left Salisbury under the command of Major Forbes, and the two columns had con-



(Upper) A RHINOCEROS.

(Lower) A NATIVE CUTTING AWAY THE GRASS IN THE JUNGLE.



verged together at a spot called Iron Mine Hill, when lo! it was discovered that the Salisbury Column had come along with empty wagons, they having been told that the rations for both columns were being brought in by the Victoria Column, which, of course, was not the case, but a ruse so that the wagons would be able to travel light. Half of the supplies we had brought in with us was now shifted on to the Salisbury wagons, and everybody was promptly put on half rations, which was never altered except to make it quarter rations. As we were now in the enemy's country all arguments were at an end, any insubordination meaning summary punishment of a most drastic kind. We were daily coming in contact with small bodies of the enemy, skirmishes on the flanks being the order of the day, and had reached the Shanghani River. I might add that we had several thousands of Mashonas cutting down trees on our line of march. The wagons travelled four abreast, with an interval of fifty yards between each line of wagons, with an advance-guard, rear-guard, right and left flanking parties, and the main body, with wagons and artillery under Captain Lendy. The wagons were under the command of a very smart officer named Argent Curtain, who was able to round up his wagons while on the march and put them in a state of defence in four minutes, which, as one may well imagine, was a great asset.

The artillery consisted of a few old seven-pounders, about fourteen Maxims of the old style, which were continually jamming, a few Gardner guns, and a one-pound Maxim Nordenfelt. Most of these guns had been taken from the Portuguese at Massi Kessi.



I saw one day a seven-pound shell put amongst the Matabeles which did not burst, and after it fell it rolled along the ground, the Matabeles opening fire on it. I was informed by natives afterwards that they thought that a white man was concealed inside of the shell.

After the surrounding country had been carefully scouted for the enemy, and the wagons had been got safely across the Shanghani River, we laegered up in a fairly good position. That day I was sent out to a small hill about five miles to the south to act as vedette, where I observed large bodies of natives moving to the west, but evidently not intent on attacking the Laeger. I remained at my post till night fell, as it was customary for vedettes to be visited, but for some unknown reason no one came, so I eventually made my way through the darkness to the camp, where I found the whereabouts my company was facing, off-saddled my horse about one hundred yards from the Laeger, and deposited my blanket, cavalry coat, etc., on the ground. A man's whole equipment, by the way, had to be carried on his horse.

After drawing my horse feed and tying him on the lines, I found my mess and half section, and fell to, being pretty hungry on account of the half rations. As a matter of fact, we were generally that way, being in addition on duty eighteen hours out of the twenty-four, principally on account of the extraordinary precautions taken to prevent a surprise at night. Everything was doubled; for instance, there was an outside picket and an inside picket, a main guard, and a horse guard.



Glad to turn in, and being too tired to shift my saddle, etc., I lay down where I had off-saddled on my arrival. There was no such thing as undressing when one went to bed. The order was to sleep fully equipped with bandolier containing fifty Martini cartridges, which was something to get used to, to say nothing of spurs on and the rifle by the side—and woe betide the man caught with his boots off; he was before the O.C. the next day. I might add that a large number of native women had been brought in that day, having been left behind when their men had retreated on our approach, which, not being customary, was certainly a most suspicious circumstance. Now something had to be done with these women, as they could not be allowed to wander about and spy on the camp; so they were placed in a native village, about half a mile from the Laeger, with a native guard in charge. That day we lost about a thousand of our native woodcutters by desertion; in fact, all that could elude the vigilance of Lieutenant Brabant, an ex-native Commissioner in charge of them. Before they bolted they asked when the other Impi of white men were coming along, and on being told that no other white men were coming, they replied that if we were all the white men to fight the whole of the Matabele nation, we would be eaten—that is, massacred.

I was awakened just before daybreak, and the moon showing just above the trees, by the pop, pop, pop of guns being fired from the direction where the women had been quarantined. Getting up, I immediately made for my position on the wagons—all of us having our individual positions in case of attack.

On arrival at the wagons, which did not take more than a few seconds, as, being fully dressed, I had only to grab my rifle and go, I found every one scrambling to his post; and a few minutes afterwards, while we were waiting to see what was going to happen, from all round the camp a red flame of rifle fire opened on the Laeger, mostly going high, followed by a rush of some hundreds of natives with hands up, shouting that they were our people. Magnesium fires were sent up, and we saw in the front rank natives who were evidently our woodcutters, and behind, driving them in front, the Matabele Impis. Of course there was no chance of opening up and letting them in, as in that case the ruse would have succeeded and the Matabeles would have got into the Laeger, and this story would not have been told. The unfortunate road-cutters who had broken camp to go and see the women, as was conjectured by the Matabeles that they would, were between two fires, and had to take their chance with the charging Matabele.

While the firing lasted, which it did till daybreak, it was extremely hot. I might mention that the Mashonas in the Laeger were in the most abject state of terror, and evacuated the position in which they were placed—a piece of ground situated between the two Laegers, and protected by a thorn-bush boma, and covered by the guns and rifles of both columns. They invaded our Laegers, getting under our feet and underneath the gun carriages, where they lay on their faces, being in everybody's way and refusing to budge, even when a sound kick was administered. When it became sufficiently light, we saddled up and went out after the enemy, being covered by the seven-

pounders from the Laeger; and after an hour or two of bush fighting they seemed to have had enough of it, and were glad to get away, as when they mustered in large masses the shells from the seven-pounders in the Laeger dropped in amongst them, putting them in confusion. I found one native lying dead behind my saddle, where he had no doubt attempted to take cover from the hail of bullets. Another was seen seemingly standing alive by a tree, but on shots being put into him, it was discovered that he was already dead, having hanged himself after being shot through the ankle and unable to get away. He had taken off his *rimpi*—a piece of leather like a bootlace used for tying on the *moocha*—apron.

The enemy being now all dispersed, we returned to the Laeger, and so ended the first battle for the conquest of Matabeleland. The casualties amongst the whites were slight, but pretty heavy amongst the native contingent who had broken Laeger.

The following day we broke camp and continued our march, following the watershed due west. Things were very nervy after that night attack, and we were constantly getting false alarms. The camp was aroused every morning at 4 a.m., when everybody stood to his post till we marched off at daylight. There was continuous skirmishing on our flanks, and occasionally we had to laeger up on the march, when the transport officer showed us what could be done. One unfortunate disaster occurred while thus skirmishing. Captain Williams's horse became unmanageable, and bolted right into the enemy, eventually, as we heard, throwing him. Of course the Matabeles followed him, and came up with him on a small

kopje, Captain Williams having a Colt repeating rifle, taking, I think, sixteen shots. The enemy commenced to stalk him, and Captain Williams opened fire, but what they marvelled about was that they could not see him load; and as they were armed with Martinis like ourselves, and had never seen a repeating rifle, one can understand that they thought it was a form of witchcraft. However, they eventually overcame him and he was killed, and on their examining him they saw that he was tattooed on both arms and wearing spectacles. This they took to be a sign that he was a big *Induma*—chief—so his arms were skinned for the pictures and the spectacles were carried off.

Nothing further happened until we entered the Sonambula forest, where things were a bit jumpy, and the flanking parties had all they could do to keep the enemy off the main columns. It was a case of hurry, hurry, to get out of the bush, as an attack in force in the forest meant an advantage for the enemy; we should have been in the thick bush entirely cut off from water, and they could have crept up close and rushed the Laeger at night, practically without warning. I rather think that that was the strategy that they intended to employ, but owing to the smart skirmishing on the flanks, and the bullocks being driven at the run—the wagons, for reasons already explained, were only half loaded, and some of them practically empty—and after about half an hour of real hard going, to our relief we emerged from the forest to the open country of the Imbembesi, where down in the valley flows a small river by that name. The camp was pitched on a commanding hill, about seven hundred yards from the forest.

The Laeger having been formed, the horses were turned out to graze, about a dozen being kept behind in the Laeger for emergencies. A good many messes had cook boys, their engagement being quite a private matter, and the boys given strictly to understand that they could expect no rations from us, which certainly did not worry our man, who was a Zulu, and always managed to raid more than enough food for himself, occasionally bringing along native vegetables to the mess, so he was a distinct advantage. Well, the boys had reached the stream and were busily engaged in washing the pots before bringing them up to the camp with water, the horses at this time being about a thousand yards from the Laeger, when intermittent shots were heard from the south-east corner of the forest. The enemy had opened fire on the grazing guard and were shooting at the horses, in the endeavour to cut them off from the Laeger.

The camp was now in commotion, and the reserve horses, already saddled, were speedily mounted and galloped to the assistance of the grazing guard, whose horses, numbering about eight hundred, were now in full flight. All the buglers were summoned, and kept incessantly blowing the well-known call of "horses in," and the grazing guard, with the others who had gone to their assistance, were doing their best to turn the horses' heads in the direction of the Laeger, when one old stager, pricking up his ears at hearing the old familiar call—invariably followed by a feed of corn—came straight for the Laeger at the gallop, followed by the remainder. The wagons were opened out, and the whole of them came in with a rush, with the



exception of a few poor beasts that had been shot. The boys who had been down at the river were in before the horses, and some did not wait to bring their cooking utensils with them.

No sooner had the horses got inside than the charge of the Matabeles from the east-south-east commenced—that being the nearest position of the Laeger to the forest, which was approximately seven hundred yards. They were led by the Imbezu Regiment—Lobengula's crack regiment, all thoroughbred Matabeles, descended from the pioneers who trekked from Zululand in the year 1837—and followed by the Ingubu and Insukumeni. It was certainly a magnificent sight, as they came on in close formation, with their black ostrich feather headdress, their different-coloured shields and the assegai held at the ready. Each regiment had its distinctive coloured shield, made of bullock's hide, the Imbezu having black and white, the Ingubu brown and white, and the Insukumeni brown, black, and white. The charging Impis came on in echelon order, and the firing from the Laegers was terrific. There must have been seven or eight Maxims, besides two Gardners and a couple of seven-pounders playing on them as well as all the rifle fire. I remember that the rifle became so hot that one could not touch the naked barrel with the hands.

They were all eventually swept off, together with others who had tried to carry off the wounded. The exceptions were a Matabele and a young boy of about sixteen years of age, who were evidently determined to reach the Laeger. They ran towards it very fast, zigzagging as they ran, and for a long time, with



nothing seeming to hit them, they appeared to have a charmed life, as the ground in front of them and all around was ploughed up by the rain of bullets falling around. The two warriors were the only two remaining from the charge, and at one time it seemed that they would get right up to the Laeger, but it was not to be as, after charging for over six hundred yards, they fell with dozens of bullets in them.

It was estimated that about two thousand were killed that day. They did not do such bad shooting, as they managed to shoot some of our men off the Maxim guns, and bespattered the steel shield used on Maxim guns in those days. Thus ended the second big fight, and never afterwards did they attempt to attack in close formation. I might add that the native boys attached to the different messes never afterwards forgot the bugle call of "horses in." Whenever it was blown, which it was every day, no matter where they were or what they were doing, they would drop everything and make for the Laeger.

I must mention one funny incident. An old hand by the name of Tom Kenyon, who had lost one eye and had a game leg, danced up with his game leg swinging, and remarked that after what he had seen that day, if any one asked him to charge Maxim guns he would argue the point !

I believe that this campaign of 1893 was the first time that Maxim guns had been really tested in action. On going over the battle-ground, very many brand-new rifles were picked up, evidently only recently having been taken from their cases. Rifles in the hands of natives, or, as a matter of fact, any one un-

accustomed to their use, are most harmless weapons, no practice being the rule, and the rifles only issued in an emergency. Some wounded prisoners were brought in for the purpose of extracting information, which they did not give. While some of us were looking at the prisoners, one of the warriors of the Imbezu Regiment remarked that their regiment had been beaten by boys, which was more or less correct, as, with a great many others, I had not felt the necessity for shaving.

We broke camp the next day and continued our march, as it was part of our programme that there should be no delay, if only on account of food, the near approach of the rains, and also to avoid giving the enemy a chance to formulate plans for an attack on any given point. We were now in sight of that historical landmark, "Thabas Induna," a hill standing out of the plains only about ten or eleven miles from Bulawayo. Nothing occurred, though the next night we saw fires in the direction of Bulawayo, to hear later that it was Lobengula's town itself in flames. Whether it was fired by our scouts, or by the natives themselves, I never rightly heard.

Two days later we entered Bulawayo to the music of two Scotch pipers, MacDonald and Grant, who belonged to the column, and came in with us. We laagered in the vicinity of Johann Colenbrander's house, who was before the war the British representative at Bulawayo. When the trouble at Victoria took place, Colenbrander received permission from Lobengula to take the road, which he did, returning again with Major Goold Adams and the Southern Column, together with that famous big game hunter,

F. C. Selous, who afterwards met his death fighting against the Germans at Salaita Hill in British East Africa. Bulawayo itself was burning merrily, and continued to do so for over two weeks. In going through the native town of Bulawayo I discovered two women in different huts hanging to the rafters, evidently having committed suicide rather than leave their homes. The howling of the homeless dogs left behind by their owners made the nights hideous. Known as Loben's band, their howling commenced about sundown and kept on through the greater part of the night, and the unfamiliar sight of a white man would make them bolt like the wind. Another great trial were the flies, which were in enormous quantities, and one could not put anything down in the way of food without its becoming the receptacle for the pests. A sickness followed, which caused one to vomit after taking anything in the way of food, and was known locally as the "fly sickness."

The Southern Column had not yet arrived, and the main body of the Matabele had retreated north, taking their king with them. Lobengula was reported at this time to be very stout, and not very good at walking. He left in a four-wheeled buggy drawn by his own people. Preparations were now being made for a flying column to pursue them with a view to their surrender.

On a given day we marched out, rations being now extremely scarce. I think they were called quarter rations, but whatever their description, they only amounted to a cup of flour per man a day, sugar an unknown quantity—I do not remember it—and tea

had to be boiled over and over again until all vestige of colour was absent. On the top of this, rain caught us as we were nearing the mission station of Shiloh, formerly the abode of the Rev. Thomas. I heard afterwards from the Matabele that one of the sons of the Rev. Thomas, by the name of David, became an Induna—chief—under Lobengula, and went north of the Zambesi with an Impi to punish the Barotse, who had failed to pay their taxes. In that adventure he was killed, and, as the story goes, when the Impi arrived back at Bulawayo to report the result of the expedition, the king having asked them where was their Induna, they replied that an attack had been made on the Barotse, the Matabele being in skirmishing parties, and the Barotse had swooped down on David's section before they could come to his assistance and killed them all. The king thereupon ordered the rest of the Impi to be knocked on the head with knobkerries and thrown to the crocodiles.

The rain now came down in torrents, running over the ground a foot deep, and as it was just on nightfall, and we had no tents and no possibility of getting anything dry, we had to lie in the mud churned up by the horses. I might mention that officers and men fared alike in everything, even to receiving the same rations ; but the next morning there were signs of dissatisfaction, and it was reported that the Salisbury Column would not move forward under the prevailing conditions. Major Wilson, O.C. Victoria Column, then came and fell us in, and put the matter before us. Those who would follow him were to take one pace forward, the others to stand fast, and those who had

lost their horses—they had been dying very rapidly lately—would not be expected to take part in the advance. I think that every man moved forward, unmounted men being subsequently returned to Bulawayo, while the Flying Column proceeded on its way to Inyati Mission Station, where the rain again fell in torrents ; and I call to mind seeing Major Allan Wilson sleeping at the corner of an eave of a building, the rain pouring on him from the house, but without awakening him.

All kinds of things were utilized for fuel, including chairs, tables, etc. I picked up a copy of the *Pickwick Papers*, the only thing I had to read for the next six months, and found it very entertaining ; I used to open it up at haphazard, and read snatches from it.

We were off again next day, the country *en route* being very marshy and some of the horses becoming bogged. Towards evening we came within a few miles of the enemy, but owing to the system of sending up rockets, the next day we found that they had gone. We now arrived on the Shanghani River—a very long way farther to the north-west from where we had crossed it on our entry into the country—and camped. Things were getting serious, food not having come in as it was supposed to have done by means of Scotch carts, which, being a two-wheeled vehicle, could travel very much faster and easier than a wagon ; but the point is that they had not arrived, and we were getting to the end of our tether. Major Wilson came round the camp to get together thirty or forty men to make a dash to capture the king, who was reported by the scouts to be not far off. If that could have



been brought about, it would have without doubt ended hostilities.

That day I was down with a bad attack of fever, and Major Wilson suggested that as I was unfit to ride I should loan my horse to a comrade of mine, Welby by name, whose own mount had been shot, and who was about my age and weight. I agreed, though far from caring to part with an animal that had carried me safely so far; add to which that it was valuable, a free gift from the Chartered Company, and—what is much prized in that country—“salted,” that is to say, immune from horse sickness. However, Welby took the horse, and that was the last I saw of either of them.

Thirty-five men left with Major Wilson and crossed the Shanghani, which was easily fordable at that time; but with the rain beginning again it rose, and was soon in flood. Later on, Captain Napier arrived, reporting that a heavy engagement was taking place with Major Wilson's party and the enemy, and an immediate attempt should be made to go to their relief. An attempt was made, but found impracticable. One man, to test it, did swim the river, he being a powerful swimmer, but for a large body of men encumbered with their impedimenta it was out of the question. We could hear heavy firing from Wilson's party, and it was still raining heavily when the two American scouts turned up with the intelligence that the party was surrounded and, failing help, would be annihilated. To add to the general ill-fortune, the Matabele, being a warlike nation, saw the point, and we were attacked from the opposite bank to prevent us joining up.

So ended that fatal day, when Wilson's party were killed to a man. The bronze plaque executed to the memory of "Wilson's Last Stand" is so very lifelike that I could pick out every man on it, having known them all. In the meantime, we in turn were surrounded by the enemy, and without food, the carts not having arrived. We had killed our horses to eat when Commandant Raff, of Raff's Rangers, took matters in hand. That night, when it became dark, we abandoned the gun carriages, and carried the guns in blankets through an opening of the hordes of Matabeles that surrounded us. After we had broken through, and as the food had entirely given out, it was a case of *saue qui peut*. Rivers in flood, no rations, and a great many of the men were without boots and making some sort of shift with saddle wallets. On arriving at a flooded river we would take off our clothes, tie them on our heads, and take to the water, regardless of crocodiles. We arrived in driblets back at Bulawayo in a starving condition, to find that the whole camp for miles round was nothing but a morass churned up by ten thousand head of cattle. Thousands wandered off and were not missed, as it was impossible to herd them, and eventually it was given up.

I made my way to the remnants of my old mess. They had made a bit of a hovel and, sheltered more or less from the rain, were sitting round a camp kettle. After having greeted them, starving as I was, I found that all they had in the pot was uncrushed kaffir corn, to get which stuff tender and fit for food would take untold hours, as I never remembered it to have reached that desirable state. However, at that time old

leather would have been acceptable, and for one whole year after the finish of the campaign, if at meal-time I felt any disinclination for food, the memory of that time in the campaign brought back my appetite like a miracle.

Sickness was now very busy in Bulawayo, and several funerals were taking place daily owing principally to the improper food, although by now we had erected shelters from the rain. Rumours were coming in that the Matabeles were anxious to surrender, which proved correct, as it shortly afterwards took place. They said that after the fight that Wilson's party had put up, it would be impossible to beat the white men.

At the surrender a curious affair was disclosed. It appears that during the pursuit of the king, two men, named Wilson and Daniels, were on vedette duty, when they were approached by a party of chiefs, envoys of Lobengula, with an offering of a thousand pounds in gold as a peace-offering, together with the message that the Matabele wished to surrender and lay down their arms. The gold was accepted, and the envoys told that it would be all right, whereupon they took the news to Lobengula without troubling to be taken to the commanding officer of the column. The two men then decided to keep the gold and say nothing about it—a particularly wicked action, because had it been reported there is no doubt that the Wilson disaster would not have occurred.

The rogues were subsequently traced through being in possession of so much gold. As usual in expeditions of this sort a great deal of gambling



THE AUTHOR (*left*) IN HIS TENT.

BOSTON  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY





takes place, and suspicion was aroused by their very unusual display of wealth. Identified by the envoys, they received fourteen years' penal servitude, to be released three years later on volunteering for the Rebellion of 1896.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### I ELECT TO SETTLE IN THE COUNTRY

WAGONS were now coming up from the south with supplies, mining implements, etc. Cecil Rhodes had also arrived, and had made us a speech to the effect that the Chartered Company were the more pleased at the way we had won the war, as it had been prophesied that it would take ten thousand Imperial troops to conquer Matabeleland. What was more to the point, he added that the Chartered Company, as a mark of their appreciation, would forgo their half of the looted cattle—our arrangement with them had been fifty-fifty—and we should receive the whole of it. Unfortunately for us, the Imperial Government sent out a Commission which decided that only the king's cattle were subject to confiscation, and all private cattle had to be returned to their owners and branded N.C.—native cattle. After all the cattle had been sold, which must have taken quite a year, the dividend paid out was only forty-two pounds, so there must have been a considerable leakage somewhere.

The cattle were principally sold to large butchers in Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Pretoria, at an average price of twelve shillings a head. Chartered Company's cattle were branded C.C., but unbeknown to the Company, an individual who shall be nameless

succeeded in registering a brand with his initials, which were also C. C. This went undetected for quite a while without any one being the wiser, and when it was found out and stopped I heard that he had made quite a lot of money. Another individual, having as his initials O. C., registered a brand with these initials, so that by the simple act of covering the Chartered Company's brand, they automatically became his, he also doing well. When the butchers left for down country with their herds of several thousand strong, cattle-lifters followed on their flanks, and when they arrived at their destination they found themselves with unaccountably diminished herds.

The disbandment of soldiers was now taking place, every man demobilized being issued with a "Farm Right," *i.e.* the right to peg out a farm of six thousand acres anywhere on either side of the river, though not on both sides, as that would have monopolized all the water to the exclusion of others. With this "Farm Right" was the right to peg off twenty gold claims, free of all development liabilities. According to the Mashonaland law, there was required to be sunk a thirty-foot shaft in six months or a sixty-foot shaft in twelve months, under pain of forfeiture of the claims. The disbanded soldiers who were going down country disposed of their "rights" to syndicates of moneyed people, who had come in with the different columns, for round about one hundred pounds. Those who wished to remain in the country were given one month's rations; also by the foresight of the Administrator (Dr. Jameson), donkeys were coming in for the use of the prospectors. I went myself and saw the doctor, who was presiding over

the destinies of the country with the help of Sir John Willoughby, explaining how I was fixed through having lost my horse in consequence of lending him to a comrade. He at once told me to get another horse from the police lines, which were now being formed, and he also informed me about the donkeys that he had coming, and told me to help myself when they arrived, which I did.

At that time two others and myself were struggling with a wild ox, trying to get a pack on his back, to which he had a most decided objection. After packing the donkeys, including a case of ammunition, of which there was any quantity free to any one who cared to take it away, three of us set forth to peg out our farms, wandering off in the direction which appeared most likely to bring us into a fertile country. For some reason or other we chose the south-east—no one, by the way, would tell another in which direction he was going, so that he would have the coast clear for himself—and after several days' travelling we came into the rich country of the Mullingwane Hills, where dwelt Umlugulu, a brother of Lobengula, who sent us presents of sheep and enormous quantities of *tyala*—native beer. He was very friendly disposed, and assisted us with men to build the necessary beacons showing the corners of the farm. The method used for demarcating the six-thousand-acre farm was to canter the horse for half an hour in each direction, which would give you approximately ten square miles. After that was finished you made a rough sketch of the area, giving any rivers or villages, or other distinctive features, that would be sufficient to secure a title. Survey was at the option of the owner, when he felt

disposed for it. A Government Survey was made eventually, when a method of give-and-take was instituted, a man having too much giving to a man who had not enough. It was a great source of wonder to the Matabeles that we should wander about the country in twos and threes at the mercy of any malcontents who cared to wipe us out.

The food of the Matabeles proper—that is, the aristocracy, who were direct descendants of the people who came from the south—was beef and beer, of which they used to consume enormous quantities. There were degrees of caste amongst them, the Ezanzis being the aristocracy, they, as their name signifies, being the descendants of the warriors who came from the south. Then came the Opendulas (the turnovers), and, as *their* name signifies, children born of slave parents in Matabeleland, who when about sixteen years of age were formed into regiments, and then were classed as Matabele. Lastly, there were the Maholi, slaves of recent capture.

It is interesting to reflect that the Matabeles, when they left Zululand in the year 1837, only numbered three hundred fighting men and their women and children, and in 1893 they had formed a nation computed at thirty thousand fighting men. The evidences of their trek remain to this day in Khama's country, and all along the line of their march, in the form of cairns of stones thrown up to serve as forts. The former natives that occupied the country were known as Mambo's people, but not a vestige of them remains to-day. Then came the search for the precious metal—the *raison d'être* of the Chartered Company, and the beginning of new history.



As before mentioned, we wandered in ones or twos in search of gold. It was already known that ancient workings of gold mines existed in the country, and called by the natives *M'gordi*—a hole. The system in those early days, money to the natives having no significance, was to give a man a blanket if he could show one a *M'gordi*. The next move was to peg it out, and then to go into Bulawayo and sell it to a syndicate formed to purchase claims, prospectors receiving not much cash but a very large amount of shares on flotation, known as scrip. Several prospectors at that time, if things had gone well, would have been very rich men, but in nearly every case the companies went into liquidation, and in a test case it was proved to the satisfaction of the law, if not to the prospectors, that shares held in the liquidated companies did not entitle prospectors to take part in any future company that might be formed. So instead of being embryo millionaires, those who had spent whatever cash they received generally finished up broke, often to take jobs in the different mines that they themselves had discovered. The majority of the old prospectors were massacred in the Rebellion of 1896, and living as they did in isolated camps, their bodies in many cases were never discovered.

There is no doubt that it is an extremely hard life, but as a sop there is the fascination of one day striking it rich and settling down to a life of ease, but during my experience only a very few reached that desirable state. If a bit of luck came their way, the cash was usually finished in a spree, prolonged while the wherewithal lasted. It must be borne in mind that it is the style of living that causes these periodical

“busts”; the long months, with possibly not a soul to speak to, and then the meeting of old comrades, who cannot be passed without the fellowship of a parting drink. There was a well-known prospector at that time named Alec Anderson, who had a great liking for champagne, and he said that if ever he struck it rich, he would have a bath in his favourite beverage. He did strike it rich, and had the bath, and was known ever after as “Champagne” Anderson. Another character, named Garret Harrington, an Irishman, who had amassed a lot of money in the early days of the Kimberley diamond diggings, became a partner of Cecil Rhodes, and it was said that by the judicious use of his money, Rhodes was able to bring about his great amalgamation of the Kimberley mines, for which a cheque was passed for seven millions sterling. Garret Harrington, as he told the tale, went to New York and spent his share, a quarter of a million, in riotous living, returning to South Africa broke. When I met him he had just been fitted out by Dr. Jameson for a prospecting trip, but I never heard of his making another big strike. Then there was Charlton, one of the former owners of the Meyer and Charlton mine on the Witwatersrandt, who received as his share of the sale of the property seventy thousand pounds in cash, besides very much more in scrip. He also, with many others, was prospecting with the hopes of striking it rich again, but none of them to my knowledge became wealthy a second time.

This being a British Colony, one of the principal things was sport, and I call to mind our first race-meeting, which was held in the early part of 1894,

and took place on the site where we had camped on our entry into Bulawayo. Overlooking the race-course was a watch-tower for protection purposes, and members of the new force, the Matabeleland Mounted Police, were always stationed on the tower, keeping a look out in case the Matabeles should change their minds and have another go.

Well, on this particular day, a notorious character, who went by the pseudonym of "Rory of the Hills," had been charged with the offence of shooting a native, giving as his reason that the victim had laughed, and that he, Rory, thought it was therefore time to shoot. He was put up on the watch-tower—there was no jail at the time—in charge of the police stationed there, with a Maxim gun and gunners, ready for emergencies. When everybody was congregated on the racecourse, and the excitement of the races had presumably taken the guard's attention from the prisoner, the next thing we knew was that we were taking cover from a hail of bullets. This was Rory's little joke, but fortunately he was snaffled before he could get the correct range. I heard that he was sent out of the country under escort, the Chartered Company having no intention of starting a penal settlement at that early date.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE JAMESON RAID

THE old township of Bulawayo was on the site where we had camped on our entry with the column, and consisted of one street only. Principally constructed of "wattle and daub," the roofs had been brought from the deserted Matabele villages a few miles out of Bulawayo. This site was occupied for about six months, and in the meantime the new township—the present Bulawayo—situated two miles to the south on the site of a former Matabele village called Elangeni, was being surveyed. On a given date, plots were put up for auction at the upset price of thirty pounds the plot, with the condition that a building of the value of two hundred pounds was to be erected within six months. There was a catch in this, some people being either "in the know," or chancing it, as in the large majority of cases no buildings were erected. But as the six months' limit given for the erection of the buildings drew nigh, great activity was to be observed amongst the plot-holders, some starting on foundations, others to put up lavatories, without any other building to show that they were required. Everything, in fact, looked as if a big building boom was about to take place, but building conditions having been passed by the Chartered Company, all this feverish activity came to

an end. During the next six months stands were changing hands at sums ranging from five hundred to two thousand pounds each, and still no building went on ; but when the new purchasers had what the former owners lacked, houses began to go up in earnest. The first real building to be started and completed was the Maxim Hotel, belonging to Messrs. Parsons & Hay. Outside, in the country, mines were being worked, mining companies were being floated, and, in fact, things were very prosperous.

It was at about this time that I took a trip to the Old Country and ran into the boom in South African shares in London, when Chartered Company shares touched nine pounds, and other South African shares in proportion. I managed to float my claims into a Development Company, thereafter to sail back to South Africa to undertake the management of them, but on arriving in Johannesburg I found everything in a most unsettled state. The Uitlanders, or foreigners, were out for their right to be admitted to the Franchise, and the Boers refusing to grant their claim, as, being a nation of farmers, they considered that they would be swamped by the ever-increasing population of Uitlanders in the towns. These last were now raising volunteers and forming them into corps, which were being drilled openly in the streets under such titles as "The Devil's Own," "Bettington's Horse," and many others of a similar nature. On the top of all this came the news that Dr. Jameson, with the Rhodesian Mounted Police, had left Pitsani Pothlugo and was on his way to Johannesburg—as the yarn went—to save the women and children.



The town at this time was completely surrounded by Boers, who had guns placed on the principal buildings; and as I rather looked on the Rhodesians as my own people, and knew quite a number of the men among the raiders, I decided with a young friend of mine to attempt to ride through to Krugersdorp. Looking at the matter from a common-sense point of view, I knew that it would be next to impossible to get there by way of the open veldt, pickets of armed Boers being everywhere, so we decided to try a bluff and take the main road for it. Providing ourselves, therefore, with slouch hats well pulled over the eyes, and riding with only one spur, in the Boer fashion, we left Johannesburg at an easy canter—the Boer does not trot his horse, as he considers it tantamount to working his passage—and saluted with *Verdaag, Meinbeers*—good morning, gentlemen. Responding in a like manner, we kept on our way, always passing through the small *dorps*—villages—at an easy canter, so as not to be brought into conversation with any one, and so arrived without mishap at Krugersdorp.

There we heard that Jameson had surrendered at Doornkop, and with the wounded being brought into the hospital, presided over by a Dr. Viljoen, we realized that the fat was properly in the fire, but there was nothing for it but to make our way to the Transvaal Hotel, and put our horses in the stable. I ordered dinner, not knowing, as I remarked to my pal, when we might get another, and keeping out of the way in our rooms till the gong went.

We were not so foolish as to think that our arrival

had not been noticed, especially as I had observed a young man, evidently Dutch, walking aimlessly up and down outside the hotel. At this time I was wearing top-boots, and as I was carrying between twenty and thirty pounds in gold on my person, I thought it advisable to drop the gold in my boots and let it slip down, which I did before going in to dinner. I expected that we should be interrupted, but both of us being very hungry, we were in hopes that once we started eating we should be allowed to finish it, and so it turned out. We were well on the way when the young Dutchman came unobtrusively to our table, and excusing himself, told me that the Llandroft—magistrate—would like to see us. There would be no objection, he added politely, to our finishing our dinner first, so as it was evident that he had instructions not to leave us, I asked him to join us in a drink. Accepting, he told us some of the news, and I in turn told him that we had come from Johannesburg, which seemed to surprise him very much; in fact, I don't think he believed me, knowing that Johannesburg was surrounded by Commandos.

The dinner—quite a good one, and contrasting very much with what we had to make believe was dinner afterwards—having come to an end, we set out for the Llandroft, who asked what we were doing in Krugersdorp. On my replying that we had come from Johannesburg, he said that in that case we had a pass; my answer to that being that we had none, but having heard that a friend of mine, Brooks by name, was in the hospital at Krugersdorp wounded, we had ridden through to see him. We were then sent under escort to the hospital to see the imaginary

Brooks, but of course none of the wounded men we passed with the escort answered to the name.

I could see that where they had been merely suspicious they were now quite certain that they had got something. At any rate, they wasted no more time on us, but marched us back to the Llandroft, where we were searched, but fortunately without having to take off our boots, whereby my gold was saved. My mining papers, *i.e.* the agreement with the syndicate in London, were, however, pounced on as a big find, and we had to write our names across the flap of the envelopes containing our papers, in order to give the futile idea that they could not be opened or in any way tampered with. We were then ordered to be confined.

We were put in the court-house, the jail being full, and joined by others who had been captured like ourselves. Our rations consisted of a one-pound tin of bully beef, one loaf of bread, and a bucket of water, and a tin pannikin between the two of us per day. Blankets or beds were not provided, and neither were they the whole time that I was a prisoner. Large numbers of the Backveldters—Boers from the farms in the back blocks—used to come and stare at us daily, some of them making suggestive signs by means of a cartridge, placed bullet end at the forehead; but we got quite used to this amiable peculiarity, and ceased to take any notice of them. All this time Johannesburg was a besieged city, no one being able to get out, or anything allowed to go in.

The part of the court-house where we were confined was used for the business of the court, the whole

being divided by a rail about the centre, the other side of it being where the public heard the proceedings. This side was also used as a storeroom, with an armed guard in attendance. One day, then, being rather fed up with bully and water, and having the sovereigns concealed in my boots, I conceived the idea of bearding—good term this—one of the guards to see if it was possible to buy anything in the eating line. I could make myself passably understood in Dutch at this time, having picked it up during my sojourn on the diamond diggings.

He was an elderly man with a long grey beard, and wearing a very old slouch hat, open shirt, no collar, moleskin slacks, a bandolier, and an old Martini rifle. I went up to him, and keeping pace with him on his beat, opened out to him in this manner: "Say, Oom"—uncle—"this is becoming a bit monotonous, no tea or coffee or any warm food; but I have some money, and would like to buy something to eat." I was never more surprised in my life when he replied in English, "Keep straight on, and do not appear to be talking to me"; but I did what I was told, and kept looking straight ahead. He then informed me that he was a Scotsman, and had married a daughter of one of the Voortrekers—Boer pioneers—but that they were still suspicious of him, and watched him.

I fished for a couple of sovereigns and asked him to do his best, and if he could manage to get a telegram through to a friend of mine in Johannesburg I should consider it a great favour. Now it is an extraordinary thing that telegrams were being censored and controlled by the Boers at Krugersdorp, but mine got

through, and was received by my friend, the old "sport" turning up next day with a bottle of whisky and some cigars, and promising something in the food line if he could manage to conceal it.

As I mentioned before, the public portion of the court-house was being used for the storage of food, and now large quantities of potatoes were being stocked there, also a hogshead of brandy. About seven o'clock in the evening an English prisoner was brought from the jail suffering from typhoid fever, and evidently in its last stages, for he died during the night. I often wondered why he was not sent to the hospital. I had made inquiries, but nobody seemed to know. He was placed alongside the brandy cask, which a certain prisoner had spotted, though finding it difficult to believe it could be anything but empty. To make sure, he asked permission of the guard to talk to the sick man, and, while condoling with him, sounded the cask at the same time. He came back saying what a wonderful thing Providence was, and fishing out from his pocket a knife with a pricker attached, made a couple of small pieces of wood into skewers, returning then to the sick man with these and a pannikin hidden in his shirt.

Very soon he had two holes drilled in the cask, one for the liquid and the other for the vent, and in about a quarter of an hour was back with a pannikin full of brandy. There were many visits made to the sick man, and the tapping of the brandy remained undiscovered.

Shortly after this every one was separately court-martialled, my comrade and myself being tried



together, with ten Commandants to do the job. The most venomous witness of them all was a certain field-cornet by the name of Vogel, who swore to the saddles and horses, and to ourselves as having been Dr. Jameson's men who had escaped at the surrender at Doornkop. It was no use my swearing that I was not there, the Commandants merely replying that it had been proved, and the sentence of the Court that I should be sent to Pretoria and remain there until I could prove otherwise. With the first batch of convalescents we therefore left shortly afterwards, without having to go to the expense of buying a ticket. And we were quite a merry party, as the guards, although very keen to prevent escape, did not mind our buying at the station refreshment rooms the necessary to make a sing-song possible. I remember one man who had been shot through the lungs in two places, and even he could not be prevented from singing!

On our arrival at Pretoria at 1 a.m., we were met by a large detachment of Staats Artillery (the Boer Government State troops), and there were so many of them that on their closing around us the only thing visible was the stars overhead. A trooper galloped off to warn the jail that more prisoners were arriving, and was back in a short time reporting that that establishment was full, so we were sent to the race-course, where were practically all the raiders, numbering close on five hundred, Dr. Jameson and his staff being in the jail.

We were passed into the enclosure, which was very quiet, most of the men being asleep; and as a try-on, not that I expected to get it, I asked if it was

not customary for men forced to sleep in the open to be thrown a blanket. The long-whiskered guards having promptly informed me that that was a mistaken idea, as there were no blankets, my comrade and myself made our way to the grand stand, the wooden seats of which I thought might be less uncomfortable than sleeping on the ground. We took off our jackets and put them round our heads to keep the wind off, but it was too cold to sleep, and we were glad when the dawn broke. One advantage of rising early was that one avoided the rush for a shower bath under the tap used in race-times to water the horses.

We were two weeks on the racecourse, and during the whole of that time had no blankets. We used to wash our clothes and remain without them till they dried. Once a day a Boer came round with a cart-load of boiled meat—somebody had had the soup—and another with a cart of bread. We used to line up for this against the corrugated iron fence, the man with the grub being on the other side, where he was fairly safe from being rushed. It was possible—and I have seen it done—for a man to get served first, and then, slipping his rations to a pal, disappear back again into the tail of the line; but although the Boer had long whiskers, they were not sufficiently long to bung up his eyes; and I was quite surprised that a man having all those whiskers could be so smart as to see nearly always who had been served twice.

This went on for two weeks, those men who had money playing cards, and those who had not watching the others, till only a small number of players re-

mained to an ever-increasing number of watchers. The ladies and the élite of Pretoria used to drive round and give us flowers. If they had only known that my comrade and myself were innocent enough, I am sure they would have seen that a blanket and some goodness left in the boiled meat would have been a more appropriate offering. We often wondered who had the soup that came from the meat, but that is as far as we got.

One memorable day three of us were summoned to appear before General Joubert—locally known as “Slim Pete,” slim being the Dutch for clever; and rumour has it that in the subsequent South African War he was quietly passed away for his pro-British leanings, one instance being that when the Boers dammed the river outside Ladysmith, thinking that with the advent of the rains the dam would burst and Ladysmith and every one there would be swept away by the flood, General Joubert was instrumental in having the dam removed; though I cannot vouch for what is hearsay.

Escorted to a house, which I think was Pete’s own dwelling, close to the Government buildings, we were treated to a lecture on ingratitude. We had come to this glorious land, the Transvaal, made money out of the country, and then fought against it, or the rulers of it. The third man, George by name, an Africander, *i.e.* born in South Africa, then claimed that he was a neutral, but “Ah,” retorted the General, “those are the people we do not want; they are like the wood-louse that comes between the bark and the tree, and is good for neither.” George being disposed of, Pete then turned to my comrade and myself,

saying he understood that we came from Rhodesia, and had been on our way back there when the trouble occurred. Of course I said that that was the case, upon which we were told that if we gave our parole that we would cross the frontier without delay, we could go free.

Our luck was further in on my mentioning that our horses had been taken from us at Krugersdorp. He said they would be returned to us, and he would write a letter to the Llandroft to that effect, which he did, giving us also a pass on the railway to Krugersdorp. On our way to the station we met Oom Paul (President Kruger) driving towards us, with six Staats Artillery as escort. The old gentleman bowed to us and took off the top-hat he invariably wore, after which we arrived at the station, and secured a seat for Krugersdorp. This pass business, incidentally, is a good idea; it obviates buying a ticket, and I can recommend it to all railway companies.

Touching on Oom Paul, several good stories are told of him, the best perhaps relating to his having been asked once to open a Jewish synagogue. He demurred at first, refusing to have anything to do with it, but eventually consented, and at the opening of the synagogue made a speech to the effect that as the Jews were a people labouring in darkness he would open it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Back again at Krugersdorp, we made our way to the Transvaal Hotel, where we had put up on our previous visit. The proprietor, recognizing us, said that our horses had been taken away by Field-Cornet

Vogel. This witness against us at the prosecution promptly denied any knowledge of them, however, when we looked him up, so we left him and adjourned to the hotel to talk it over, coming to the conclusion that what was required was tact. We therefore made our way to our former acquaintance, the Llandroft, who seemed quite pleased to see us, especially when we handed him the letter from General Joubert, telling him to hand over our horses, etc. When we informed him as a side turn how sorry the General was at our arrest, he became quite apologetic, saying, "Well, gentlemen, in time of war we do not know our friends from our enemies," and shook us heartily by the hand. He himself, he added, did not know where the horses were, but would make inquiries, whereupon I launched my strong point, explaining to him that Field-Cornet Vogel had taken away our horses, saddles, etc., and now denied any knowledge of them, which fact I said could be verified by the proprietor of the hotel.

"Oh!" he cried, and shouted in a tremendous voice for Vogel, who appeared very subdued, especially when told that if the horses, saddles, etc., were not forthcoming at his office in half an hour he would be under arrest. We then withdrew, promising to be back at the appointed time to take possession, and privately congratulating ourselves on the tact employed.

When we returned, Vogel was there with the horses already saddled and bridled, and had the impertinence to ask if we would not give him something for looking after them. I refrain from repeating what I told him.



As we were now bound for Pretoria on horseback *en route* to Rhodesia, we decided to have a parting drink and make a move, as the locality did not seem to us healthy. We accordingly made our way to the first bar near the court-house, and having hooked our reins over the horse-rail, which is in front of every hotel and store for that purpose, went inside, and found it was packed with Boers. It appeared that we might have a lively time if we waited too long, but having gone up to the counter and called for refreshments, a tremendous big Boer got hold of us and wrung our hands with the greatest delight. It turned out that he was General de la Rey—known locally as Groot Adrian—one of the Commandants who had tried us by court-martial; and having insisted on our drinking at his expense, he ordered all the Dutchmen outside, and said we were the sort of people he liked. His capacity, however, being considerably in excess of ours, we looked like staying for ever, but eventually managed to get off *en route* to Pretoria, deciding to avoid any contact with the Boers if possible, as they were in a nasty mood.

That evening, nearing our destination, we were caught in a heavy thunderstorm, and took shelter in a hut attached to a deserted *winkel*—store—and slept there that night. We were properly soaked to the skin, and as in this region there was no wood to make a fire, we spent a most uncomfortable night. Away at daybreak, we rode through Pretoria, thinking it advisable not to off-saddle, the excitement being intense. Dr. Jameson and his men were still incarcerated in the jail and on the racecourse, and passing the forts we noted great activity, evidently with a view to

putting things in order. After riding some miles beyond the town, we off-saddled at a stream to give our horses a feed, and to have a bite ourselves from the stock of provisions in our wallets. What we particularly noticed was the general newness of the "get up" of the ordinary Boer farmer and transport-rider. They all seemed to have new boots, some with swagger top-boots, and I found out presently that the new gear was loot from several English wayside stores.

We had not been off-saddled long when we had a visit from a Boer farmer who lived close by. It was he who told me how the neighbourhood had been supplied with boots, etc. Some of the Boers, he remarked, had not had a pair of boots before in their lives. It had been a common sight before that time to see a Boer without shoes or stockings punching a wagon and bullocks on the transport roads. He took us round his farm and made us a present of fresh figs, of which he had a tremendous quantity, the trees forming a boundary hedge of the farm. We then said good-bye to him and made our way to where we had knee-haltered our horses—the South African way of preventing them from straying, which consists of tying one leg short at the knee to the halter, thus keeping his head down, so that he is able to graze, but unable to travel quickly, and can easily be caught.

We had not been back many minutes, when three Dutchmen rode up, saying that they had the description of our horses, and had been ordered by the field-cornet to arrest them, together with their owners. I whispered to my comrade to start saddling the horses

while I kept the Dutchmen occupied with a flow of conversation, and then, mounting my horse, my comrade having already mounted his, once in the saddle we put the spurs in and made for it. They were taken completely by surprise, but quickly mounted and followed us for a considerable distance, shouting out something that we could not catch, before giving up the chase and allowing us to slow down for a breather, thanking our stars that we had managed to give them leg bail. I have no doubt that had we gone to the field-cornet he would have confiscated the horses pending inquiries.

That afternoon we entered what is known as the bush veldt, and came on a wayside store kept by a Russian Jew. He got us some lunch and forage for our horses, and was very keen that we stopped there that night. I certainly did not like the look of him, but a bed for a change interested us, so we had dinner and paid our scores overnight, telling him that we should leave very early, probably before he was up. About daylight we made our way to the stable, saddled our horses, and rode out, but had not gone more than a hundred yards when we heard the Jew storekeeper shouting and gesticulating, and, from what we could gather, saying that we had not paid him. Taking this for another trap to detain us, and for him to curry favour with the Boers, as no doubt his winkel was on a Boer farm, we took no notice of him and rode off, vowing that we would sleep in the bush in the future, which we did every night, riding off from the road for about a half a mile, and, when properly screened from the road, off-saddling and

camping, to leave early the next morning. This method proved very successful, as we did not experience any further trouble, eventually reaching Pietersburg, about two hundred miles from Pretoria.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE SECOND MATABELE RISING

FROM Pretoria onward there were practically no farms, but what was known as the hunting veldt.

Boer farmers, when the grass was dry and eaten off on the high veldt, used to trek with their cattle to the low veldt, where the pasture was rich and luxuriant. Add that during the dry season there was an absence of malaria fever. The Boers spent their time in hunting, the flesh of the game killed being dried in strips and going under the name of biltong. The hides were made into reins and strops for harnessing cattle to the yoke. Sjamboks, too, they made from the hide of the sea cow—hippo—which found a ready sale in the markets of Johannesburg and Pretoria. There were also a good many Boers living permanently on the Crocodile River—a wild-looking lot, whose faces had never known the feel of a razor. I understood that it was against their religion to shave, but, my word, it had a weird effect on the face of a person where the growth was not regular and shot out in tufts! These Boers were known as *tak haars* on account of their hair growing irregular for the want of a comb. They were what is known as poor whites, who, I should say, did not own any stock. We encountered some of them while off-saddled at the Crocodile River.



It was very nice this alfresco travelling, and being the dry season there was no worry about shelters. We used to ride to a spot where a few dead trees lay around, and then start a fire under these, very shortly to have a big fire going without the labour of having to haul the timber. It also gave protection to our horses from the lions, which were fairly plentiful in this part.

We next crossed the Crocodile River and arrived at Fort Tuli, being now out of the Transvaal and in the Chartered Company's territory. Tuli is one of the old police camps made by the Pioneer Column on their march northwards to Fort Salisbury in 1890. It now consisted of a village of one street, with the usual hotel and store, and one or two trading stores, with a small detachment of B.S.A. Police. The old fort where the police were stationed was principally built of cases of bully beef, in the event of a retreat to serve the double purpose of giving protection and food at the same time. It was certainly an idea that deserved some credit.

From there onwards we began to witness the frightful ravages of the cattle plague, known as the rinderpest. Every stream we crossed was choked with the dead and dying, oxen as well as game, notably waterbuck and koodoo. All the vermin as well as the vultures were satiated with food, the vultures hanging about, so gorged that they were unable to move, and permitting one to walk right up to them without attempting to move off. Sluggish streams became undrinkable, and the air stank with the odour of decaying flesh, even our horses refusing to drink unless very thirsty, and usually holding their

thirst until we came to a decent-sized river. We found transport-riders camped on rivers, unable to proceed farther, their oxen having died. They were just camping, not knowing when they would be able to move, their wagons laden with different articles of commerce, principally food-stuffs for Bulawayo. In those days everything in the way of food for Europeans had to be imported. In Bulawayo, food-stuffs were up to famine prices, flour selling at two shillings the pound, maize, the normal price of which was twenty shillings the bag, fetching fifteen pounds the bag, and everything else in proportion. The freight rates ruling from Mafeking or Pretoria were one shilling a pound.

About sixty miles from Bulawayo my comrade's horse, already with a sore back, gave out; and with a coach, run by Messrs. Zeederburg & Co., happening to come along, my comrade took it, and I finished the journey alone, covering a distance of six hundred miles in seventeen days. On arriving at Bulawayo, I heard on several sides, especially from one or two of my friends who came into the country with the Victoria Column in 1893, that preparations were being made amongst the natives to start a rising, and that all information given to the authorities was put down with a firm hand. Chartered Company's shares being well up in the market, anything leaking out of this description would naturally cause a distinct drop in their market value. I call to mind that everybody thought it a great joke when a prospector, by the name of Macrory, convinced that a rising was about to take place amongst the Matabeles, warned the O.C. of the Matabeleland Mounted Police, who promptly

had Mac chained up to the gun for a day and night to allow him to cool down. When he said, on being released, that he would take care in future to keep his information to himself, they replied that that was just what they wanted him to do. A friend of mine, Tom Irving by name, who had a store on his farm about thirty miles to the south-east of Bulawayo, was laagered up for over a month before the rising started, and saved some thirty whites from being massacred.

During this time nothing was done by the powers that be, except that in cases of Europeans versus natives in the courts, the Europeans got a rough passage. I should imagine that this was done with the idea of conciliating the natives, whereas, as any old-timer would tell you, it would have exactly the opposite effect, and give the natives the impression that the whites were afraid of them. They knew, of course, as soon as we did, of the Jameson disaster, that all the fighting men had been taken prisoners by the Boers, and that, with the exception of the scattered prospectors who had conquered them in 1893, there were no fighting men left. There was also reports that natives were proceeding across the Crocodile River with cattle and returning with gunpowder, the rumour running that they were egged on by the Boers in revenge for the Jameson Raid. Anyway, I think there was no doubt that ammunition was being procured from the Transvaal, but by whom traded it is difficult to say.

After resting for a while in Bulawayo, I set out for the purpose of beaconing my claims, and making preparations for their development. The nearest point to them was the Pongo store, situated on the Pongo

River, a wayside hotel kept by two men by the names of Hulford and Soames. After staying the night there, I rode over to the nearest native village with the object of getting the necessary labour for the building of the beacons, but was surprised to find the village deserted, with the exception of a few very aged women. Leaving it, farther on in the distance I caught sight of a herd of cattle, and knowing that where were cattle would be also some one to look after them, I rode over to find several natives armed with assegais herding them. After bargaining with them as regards remuneration, I secured two of them, returning them to the claims, where, after about three hours' work, the beaconing was completed. I paid them off, parting with the usual Matabele greetings, *Hamba gasble, inkos*—"Go nicely, chief"—I replying, *Hlale gasble, madoda*—"Stay nicely, men"; but on returning towards the Pongo Hotel I saw from the distance, to my amazement, that it was on fire. I was increasing my pace, when I observed hundreds of natives surrounding the store, who, catching sight of me, gave chase, with a yell. I did not wait to ask them what they wanted, but promptly wheeled and made off in the opposite direction, noticing, as I looked back, that some of them were making detours with the object of cutting me off. Without unnecessary delay, after distancing my pursuers, I turned to the west and travelled in a direction parallel with the road, which I eventually struck, but did not follow, keeping about one hundred yards from it, so that without being observed I myself would see any Impis on the look out for stray Europeans.

Coming in sight of the Tekwe hotel and store,

which I carefully reconnoitred before venturing near, and seeing no signs of life, I got off my horse to look round, and discovered the coach from Salisbury derelict on the road, with the spokes of the wheels hacked through, and the mules, eight in number, assegaied in their harness. There were no signs of any Europeans, but the mail-bags had been cut open and the contents scattered on the road, the raiders having evidently looked for money, bank-notes, etc., the value of which by this time they knew well. The store also had been looted, and a wagon belonging to the store used to cart away the spoil, which, as the spoor showed, had been pulled by hand.

I could not remain longer to settle exactly what had happened, as at any moment a hostile Impi might have turned up, but I found out afterwards that the passengers and driver had abandoned the coach some miles back and whipped up the mules, knowing that they would do their usual journey to the stable, which was at the Tekwe hotel. They had then made for the bush, and after great hardship reached Bulawayo.

Leaving the road again, I myself made for the bush, halting at a spot near the Tekwe River, where I allowed my horse to graze by taking the bit out of his mouth and holding the reins while he fed, so that in case of alarm I could immediately spring into the saddle without waiting to put the bit in his mouth, and ride him with only the reins. I remained there all that day without seeing a native, and at night again started to travel towards Bulawayo. It was a slow process, as, not being able to follow the road, I was unable to go faster than a walk owing to the bush.



About daylight I reached the vicinity of my old farm, which was about twenty-three miles from the town, and from which I knew all the footpaths.

It was daylight by now, and in order not to be seen by any wandering native, I camped in the bed of a river, a very good spot, as there was grazing for the horse, and by climbing the bank I could get a view of the surrounding country. I was looking around when I saw a native woman quite alone coming towards me, and allowed her to approach quite close before I revealed myself. She was very frightened, and probably thought that I would do what her own people would have done had they been in a similar position to myself—that is to say, not let her go, probably to give me away to the nearest Impi.

However, she knew me, greeting me by name, and after she had got over her fright acting as if she was very pleased to see me. I questioned her as to the massacres of Europeans that I presumed had taken place. She admitted it, but naively remarked that if I had been living on the farm nobody would have harmed me. I was of a different opinion, and called her attention to the bundle she was carrying, from which was plainly discernible an assegai head and the outline of a heap of others, upon which she said that she had been ordered to take the load of assegais by her husband to another village about six hours distant.

I then told her that she could go, adding, "Now, as I am letting you go when my safety points out the foolishness of such a proceeding, I hope you will remember it, and not divulge my whereabouts to any one, or that you have ever seen me." She ex-

pressed her surprise that I should have considered her capable of such ingratitude, and with many expressions of goodwill departed on her way. I watched her till she was well out of sight, shifting then my position and travelling a considerable distance to cover up the tracks of the horse's hoofs. I calculated that as there were no other horses about at that time, if the woman gave me away, which was highly probable, short of stringent precautions I should soon find myself surrounded by the Matabele. However, I saw no one, so cannot say if the woman gave me away or not. I saw her again after peace was proclaimed, and laughing and smiling as she came up to shake hands with me. She assured me very strenuously that she had played the game, and I suppose one must give her the benefit of the doubt, but my experience has been quite different. It appears to me that they look on it in this way. If a person is so foolish as to do what I did, and which they themselves would not do, he deserves to be killed, as, by letting him live, he would be propagating a foolish race.

That night I started by footpath on my last ride, intending to reach Bulawayo by daylight if possible, the horse having had a good rest and his stomach being full. I had gone about two hours on my journey, when I pulled up to see fires straight ahead, and on getting closer to hear the hum made by a multitude of persons talking and the tinkle, tinkle made by the bells of prospectors' donkeys, which had evidently been looted. By these signs I came to the conclusion that I was approaching a hostile Impi. Knowing the country that I was travelling in like a book, I did not fall into the error of leaving the footpath. I kept to

the track, going very slowly, till I stumbled right on a man carrying a calabash, and evidently going to the river for water. He stopped dumbfounded, dropping his calabash and bolting as if his satanic majesty was behind him, while I put spurs into the horse and practically galloped through the Impi, the camp being in a panic and the natives hooking it on all sides, thus giving me a clear passage. While they were running they were shouting *ebesa! ebesa!*—horses! horses!—evidently not knowing how many horses there were, and I did not stop to tell them; no doubt they thought on the first alarm that it was a surprise attack by the *Malungu*—white man—in force.

Aware that directly they realized it was only one man, they would start to track me at once, for the next two hours I kept the horse at a steady canter, which brought me within easy distance of Bulawayo about six miles farther on, and as there were now no native villages between, I rested till daylight. I may add that during this ride from the Pongo hotel till my arrival at Bulawayo I had no food whatever.

I rode into the town at half-past seven in the morning, and after having been seen by the doctor was promptly ordered into a nursing home, having been injured by being thrown from my horse during the night.

There were many remarkable escapes during the Rebellion—that of Carruthers, for instance. He told me that he was shaft-sinking at Belingwe, and knew nothing of the rising, although if any one should have managed to get prior information it was Bob, or as the natives called him, *Imbopo*—gun—and he, too, was born in South Africa, and could speak Zulu

fluently. He happened to require some stores, etc., and was on his way to the Filabusi store when he reached a native village by the name of M'Godlwayo, and, with dusk falling, decided to sleep there before going on to the store, not more than a few miles distant. The natives had given him no inkling of the massacres that had taken place, but in the night he was aroused by a girl whispering at the door of the hut, and repeating *Imbopo, Imbopo*. Asking what was the trouble, he was told that all the white men in the district had been killed, but thought that he was having his leg pulled. With the girl, however, persisting that it was their intention to kill him before he left, and that his horse was under guard, he decided to make his way on foot to Mashonaland, the nearest frontier, and the Mashonas, as he thought, being friendly.

Thanking the girl, therefore, he took his rifle and made off into the night, the first village he stopped at being occupied partly by Mashonas and partly by Matabeles. It was necessary to pull up somewhere, as he was not only getting tired and thirsty, but wanted to find out how the land lay, and if they were friendly to the whites. He shouted out a greeting and asked them if they were loyal, which they declared they were, so he then asked for a drink of water, a big native going to fetch it, and bringing up a large calabash brimming full, which necessitated using both hands to hold it.

Carruthers leant his rifle in the crook of his arm whilst he grasped the brimming calabash; as he did so another native snatched the rifle. He dashed the calabash of water at the native who had brought it,

and chased the other who had his gun round one of the huts, whereupon the native turned and fired, but evidently being unused to firearms, missed. It was hopeless now to try and catch the fellow, as others came running up, bent on being in at the killing of the white man, so he ran as hard as he could, and being a very good runner, managed to outdistance his pursuers, only to find, however, on passing another village, that the natives there also took up the chase like a pack of wolves.

He was now becoming winded, and a ruse was necessary. Shouting, therefore, asking what they wanted, when they replied "Money!" continuing to run, he threw a handful of silver against a granite rock, thus scattering it in all directions. This had the desired effect, as they stopped to pick up the money, Carruthers in the meantime making for the long grass—which, being dry, closely matched his yellowish hair. Taking off his hat, he peeped over the grass, to see that they were spooring him up, so, putting forth all his remaining strength, he made a dash for the stony country in the distance, and careful not to leave any tracks which would disclose his trail to the enemy. When he felt confident that he had thrown off his pursuers, he took shelter in a bit of a cave amongst the rocks, and rested till nightfall, after which he made his way to M'Tibis—a large, friendly Mashona village, where was a Police Post and a trading station. He had covered a distance of over sixty miles on foot in the one day!

Another noteworthy escape was that of Jack O'Connor's. O'Connor was a prospector in the Filabusi district, and then sinking shafts on his gold-



mining proposition. His movements were probably known through a system of espionage practised by the Matabele. They used to send their womenfolk to the white man's camp with pumpkins, potatoes, etc., for sale, and then spy out the number of Europeans, rifles, etc., with a view to the easiest way of murder. Well, he was awakened one night by the natives attacking him, but successfully defended himself and fought his way towards his shaft, where he caught hold of the rope fastened to the windlass and let himself go. Naturally, his weight on the rope without the restraining man at the handles sent him to the bottom like a flash; but although the shaft was sixty feet deep, he dropped unhurt, and immediately scrambled into the drive, where he took refuge.

The natives then cut away the rope and threw the windlass down the shaft, but finding that they could not hit him with the rocks they threw down, went back to his camp and procured dynamite and fuse, some of them—probably his boys—understanding the handling of explosives. The subsequent explosion did not harm him, but of course they were not to know this, and in any case, believing that he could not escape from the shaft, they left him for dead, as they thought.

During the night O'Connor started to hack holes in the sides of the shaft with the lumps of rock thrown down on him—a most difficult performance, considering that the shaft measured six feet by four feet in diameter, and he had nothing in the shape of a ladder to hold on to. The third night he reached the surface, after being without food and water the whole time. He then had a journey of sixty miles through

hostile natives to Bulawayo, but by travelling by night and resting by day he succeeded in getting there. After this most marvellous escape, by the irony of fate, a few months later he was struck dead by lightning!

One other marvellous escape for the last, although there were many others. This was a case of some miners working on the Eagle Reef Gold Mining Company, and not very far from the store kept by Messrs. Hulford and Soames on the Pongo River. One man by the name of Tarleton escaped, the others, unfortunately, were murdered. Tarleton was awakened by a terrific blow aimed at his head with an axe, but missing its mark and striking the unfortunate man on the wrist, partially severing that member. He sprang up and defended himself as best he could with his remaining hand, and seizing some dynamite, fuse, and detonators, made for the bush. The natives followed him, knowing that he had no firearms and was severely wounded in the hand. After running a considerable distance and gaining some thick bush, he sat down, and with his sound hand made up dynamite charges. When the natives got close enough he threw a charge at them, and then ran to where the explosion took place. He did this repeatedly, until they were too scared to look for him. It was of course night, and dark, and they could not tell at which moment another charge of dynamite would burst amongst them. He eventually reached the township of Gwelo, having covered a distance of fifty miles in his wounded state, and afterwards recovered.

The first authentic news received of the rising was

on the 24th of March 1896, when Tom Maddocks, a prospector, was reported as having been killed; but it was found out afterwards that the rising had broken out simultaneously on the same day over a radius of hundreds of miles, practically from one end of Matabeleland to the other, eventually extending to the Mashonas on the east, who formerly had been our friends.

On inquiring from a Mashona ring-kop—a man with a circular ring on his head made from some kind of rubber composition, and considered, on account of his being permitted to wear it, an honourable man—why the Mashonas had joined the Matabeles, who had been their enemies and whom we relieved from their persecution, he naively replied, “ You see, the Matabeles only taxed us occasionally, and that was when they caught us unawares and we did not know when they were coming, though, generally speaking, our ‘ intelligence ’ was too much for them. Whereas the Wazungu have got us all the time for the hut tax.”

The hut tax was small at that time, being only ten shillings a year, which could be earned by any *unfaan*—small boy—in a month. The rate of pay ruling on the mines for underground work being forty to fifty shillings a month with food, and any labour considered more or less skilled much higher, really on that score it was a fatuous complaint. With the Matabeles, however, there were more important reasons, the principal one relating to the black police force, inaugurated to save expense, and, I believe, the suggestion of Cecil Rhodes. The idea was to give the Matabele some sort of substitute for the warlike raids no longer allowed them. Rhodes, therefore, at an Indaba at Bulawayo, told the chiefs that he wanted

them to send their sons to join the military police force, and it would have the double effect of upholding the traditions of the ruling caste and help the whites to rule the country. Unfortunately, like all natives, they have an inordinate conceit, and thought it was derogatory for a Matabele to do what they considered menial service. The chiefs sent their former slaves to join the police force, the pukka Matabele idling at his village, with no outlet to replace his former raiding proclivities. The men of the force were given a certain amount of power, which they sadly misused, even to the raping of young Matabele girls, which would have cost them their lives in former days. And there was practically no redress, the white authorities having discovered that the chiefs had deceived them in sending slaves instead of their sons.

Had a certain amount of force been used to enrol the aristocracy of the Matabele in the first instance, a liking and a prestige would have resulted, and in my opinion the Rebellion of 1896 would not have materialized. It was precipitated by the Jameson Raid when the country was denuded of troops, upwards of four hundred white men, women, and children being massacred without a chance of escape. I afterwards accompanied the Shanghani Patrol to bury the bodies of the unfortunate people that were murdered. It was a dreadful sight. One family of nine, the Cunninghams, I particularly remember as having been completely exterminated.

While I was in the nursing home before mentioned, an excited European galloped up, his horse all in a lather, telling us to flee for our lives as the Matabele

were upon us, he having encountered the Impi just outside the town and making for Bulawayo. The place of refuge was the Bulawayo Club, a building not quite finished, and Bulawayo at that time was a very scattered town and the home quite a mile from the Club. With a nurse I made tracks accordingly, though injured as I was, I could not go at much of a pace. However, we eventually arrived, to find everything in the liveliest state of commotion, refugees from all parts of the town arriving, and one large room allotted to the women and children. In the meantime, wires were going down country asking the representative of the British Government for permission to break open the magazine and issue rifles and ammunition, but this could not be obtained. I rather think that the powers down south thought that the position was not so serious as it was, and the wires, perhaps, a ruse to get rifles and ammunition for an ulterior motive. Things had become so serious that the men decided to rush the magazine and break it open, but in doing so, what was their surprise to find that it had already been tampered with and not half of the rifles on the books there—ammunition, too, being short.

The grave situation was not without its comic element. One of the patients in the nursing home was a big Scotsman suffering from an overdose of alcohol. A powerful man, he grabbed two nurses, one on each arm, crying, "Come on! come on!" and left in his pyjamas and bare feet, no hat, just as he had got out of bed; and as one of the nurses told me, his grip was like iron, and they had no choice but to go with him. When he arrived at the Club,



he was amongst the first to get a rifle, and as a matter of fact, he got two. He was shouting at the top of his voice, "Give me a musket! give me a musket!" in the broadest of Scotch, and at the same time pushing slighter people out of the way. The police, being advised that he was not quite all there, managed to disarm him, but quite undismayed, he found a gap in the floor left by the carpenters after having finished their day's work, and pouncing on the flooring boards, pulled them up by sheer strength and split them over the top of a door. Then, noticing a window with glass in it, he made short work of the glass, and turning to me when he thought he had everything in order, remarked that the place simply must be put in a state of defence!

We must be very thankful that the Matabeles did not attack, as it was no place to hold, though when the Market Hall was turned into a hospital, and the place surrounded with barbed-wire entanglements, had they attacked this place they would have found it a very formidable proposition. I imagine that after their experience of attacking laegers in 1893 they had no stomach for it. However, they were getting increasingly bolder, and it was necessary to go out and give them a fight now and again on the Umgusa River, about six miles from Bulawayo, which was quite a good thing, as one went out in the morning and had a scrap, and returned in the afternoon. Rifles, too, were now coming up by coaches in sections—rifles minus the bolts on one journey, and bolts minus rifles on another, as a precaution in case they should be captured by the enemy. It is a singular thing that they did not interfere with the southern

road. I inquired from chiefs after the Rebellion was over, to be told that the road was left open so that the Europeans could return whence they came. This naive "strategy" made it easier for a force to come up the road under Colonel Plumer.

All this time the rinderpest was ravaging the country, and practically no supplies were being brought up. Things in Bulawayo were at famine prices, and the enemy could not be followed on account of there being no oxen to pull the wagons, and no corn to feed the horses. Although the granaries where we patrolled were overflowing with grain, we had no means of taking it away, and were forced to destroy it to prevent the enemy returning to their villages for food, and so keep up an interminable guerilla warfare. These villages had to be set on fire, following which—as is usually the case in these native wars—a famine set in. The Matabeles themselves, the fighting portion, at any rate, had sufficient food, as wherever the fighting men went they lived on the villages; but the villagers had nothing, and came into Bulawayo and had to be fed. Eventually, Cecil John Rhodes came on the scene, and with Johann Colenbrander as interpreter, arranged a meeting with the Matabele chiefs in the Matoppo Hills, when a Treaty of Peace was arranged, the substance of which was that all murderers were to be given up for trial, and the rebels were to hand in their arms, and by so doing they would go free. That ended the Rebellion of 1896.

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